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A

SHORT AND PLAIN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT,

WITH

DEVOTIONAL

AND

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS,

FOR THE

USE OF FAMILIES.

BY THE LATE

Reverend JOB ORTON, S.T.P.

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CONTENTS.

PROVERBS. ECCLESIASTES. THE SONG OF SOLOMON. ISAIAH. JEREMIAH. LAMENTATIONS.

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The Book of PROVERBS.

INTRODUCTION.

WE have here another book, and another author, namely, Solomon, *the wisest of men, who had uncommon abilities, and large experience. It contains excellent maxims for the conduct of life. The word proverb signifies a ruling speech, or observation, that ought to have great weight with mankind; a short sententious speech, of great excellency and importance: and such among the ancients being chiefly similes and comparisons, in which one thing looked to another for the better illustration of it, it became in common use to signify any wise, important maxim. The first nine chapters are more connected than the rest, and contain a commendation of and exhortation to true wisdom: which is the fear of God. The remaining chapters contain directions how to govern ourselves in all circumstances and relations in life. Other parts of scripture are like a rich mine, where the precious ore runs along in one continued vein; but this book is like a heap of pearls, which, though they are loose and unstrung, are not therefore the less valuable.*

CHAP. I.

1 THE proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;
2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; *to make men know when good advice is given, and how to give it to others; or to teach them to avoid errors, and*
3 *to correct those they have fallen into;* To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; *that is, to make them good in every circumstance, condition, and relation in life;*
4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion; *they are designed to teach caution and sagacity to the unexperienced; but they are not intended for them alone, there*
5 *is that in them which may improve the wisest.* A wise [man] will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understand-
6 ing shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings; *to understand the meaning of parables, figures, and other ways of instruction.*
7 The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge: [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction. *This verse is a key to the whole book. By wisdom, he does not mean common sagacity, carnal policy, or great learning, but true religion; and by fools here,*

are not meant those who want common sense, but who are thought-
8 *less, and oppose themselves to all true religion and piety.* My son,
hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy
mother; *meaning not his own son merely, but all his readers,*
especially the young, whom he addresses with tender affection as
9 *his children:* For they [shall be] an ornament of grace unto
thy head, and chains about thy neck; *better than any gay dress.*
10 11 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they
say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily
12 for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive
as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit;
there is no more danger of a discovery, than if they were swallowed
13 *up at once by an earthquake:* We shall find all precious sub-
stance, we shall fill our houses with spoil; *not only get enough*
to furnish out a short entertainment, but to live upon in a splendid
14 *manner hereafter:* Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have
15 one purse:* My son, walk not thou in the way with them;
16 refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and
17 make haste to shed blood. Surely in vain the net is spread in
the sight of any bird, *but wicked men are more foolish, they see*
18 *their danger, and yet run into it.* And they lay wait for their
[own] blood; they lurk privily for their [own] lives; *the ven-*
19 *geance of the magistrate, or of God, will overtake them.* So [are]
the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; *they are like a bird*
taken in a snare; [which] taketh away the life of the owners
thereof, *the owner's life to get it, or rather, his own life when he*
has got possession of it, and thinks himself secure.
20 Wisdom, *in the abstract, which is here represented as a person,*
crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; *that is,*
by conscience and Providence, by the scriptures and prophets:
21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of
22 the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, [saying,] How
long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, *that is, folly?* and
the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?
23 *that is, religion and good advice.* Turn you at my reproof:
behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known
my words unto you; *I will communicate my whole mind to you,*
24 *and explain things in the clearest manner.* Because I have called,
and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man
25 regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would
26 none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will
mock when your fear cometh; *if you disregard my counsel, I*
27 *will as little regard what becomes of you;* When your fear com-
eth as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind;
when distress *of body* and anguish *of mind* cometh upon you.
28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall
seek me early, but they shall not find me. *Here is a remarka-*

* It is probable that luxury prevailed in the peace and plenty of Solomon's reign; and young men who had spent their fortunes might turn highwaymen and plunderers: therefore they say, Do as we do, and thou, though a new comer, shalt fare as we fare, though we have been longer at the trade.

ble change of persons; divine wisdom began its speech as to them; but while speaking it turns from them, and speaks only concerning them; as if he had said, I will have no more to say to them, but
29 *thus and thus shall it be done unto them:* For that they hated
30 knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.
31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices; *suffer the natural consequences of*
32 *their folly.* For the turning away of the simple *from the paths of piety*, shall slay them, and the *ease or* prosperity of fools shall destroy them; *make them proud, scornful, and forgetful of God,*
33 *and so hasten their ruin.* But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil; *not only from real evil, but even the fear of it.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IN order to profit by the instructions of this book, the fear of God is necessary. This is the first principle which Solomon lays down; and it is indeed a very important one. We should be duly sensible that there is a God; that it is our highest wisdom to please him, and to be careful of offending him. This is the foundation of all useful knowledge. Without some degree of this principle, no instructions will profit. It should recommend this book to our study, that it far exceeds all other systems of morality among the ancients, and that it insists so much on our regard and duty to God; of which they take little or no notice

2. It is our duty to pay a serious attention to the instructions which are delivered by our parents and other teachers. Children should *hear the instructions of their fathers, and forget not the law of their mothers;* (see *v.* 8.) for the divine law secures a regard to mothers. If children think themselves wise enough, and too wise to learn, let them remember what Solomon says, *v.* 5. *a wise man will hear and will increase learning.* It is a mark of wisdom to hear; and none of us shall loose our labour by studying this book. The aged and experienced, as well as the young, may improve in knowledge and piety by it, and should therefore seriously attend to it.

3. Let us be thankful that we have so many good instructions, for gaining knowledge and regulating our conduct. God uses various methods to communicate wisdom to us; such as reason and conscience, his providence, the holy scriptures, his ministers, and spirit. Instructions are given to all of us; they are plain and open, frequently repeated, strongly and affectionately urged, and have been long continued. God is very good to us in these advantages, and it becomes us to receive them with all thankfulness.

4. Let us observe the bad consequences of despising and neglecting this advice; fear and anguish, distress and destruction, shall come upon such. They may call for mercy, but God will not hear. *v.* 26. *I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear*

cometh. Dreadful expression! enough to make one tremble: and what a sad reflection will it be, that they brought all their misery upon themselves, and that *they eat* only *the fruit of their own doings.* They live and die fools, and perish, without hope and without remedy. Let us then *receive instruction, and be wise* and happy for ever.

CHAP. II.

In order to encourage his pupil to hearken to his advice, Solomon in this chapter shows him, that wisdom may be obtained; represents the benefits of it, as what would secure the blessing and guidance of God, preserve from the snares of evil men and women, and lead him in the way to happiness.

1 MY son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my com-
mandments with thee, *that is, be careful to remember them;*
2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, [and] apply thine
heart to understanding; *command thy roving thoughts, check thy*
foolish passions, hear with diligent attention and sincere affection;
3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, [and] liftest up thy voice
for understanding; *if thou seekest direction from men, and above*
4 *all from God by fervent prayer, (James* i. 5.) If thou seekest
her as silver, and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures, *with*
the greatest diligence, resolution, and perseverance, and art not dis-
5 *couraged;* Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD,
and find the knowledge of God; *know what true religion is, and*
6 *be inclined to practise it.* For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of
7 his mouth [cometh] knowledge and understanding. He layeth
up sound wisdom for the righteous: [he is] a buckler to them
8 that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and
9 preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand
righteousness and judgment, and equity; [yea,] every good
10 path; *thy duty to God and man.* When wisdom entereth into
11 thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discre-
12 tion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To de-
liver thee from the way of the evil [man,] from the man that
speaketh froward things, *that would instil bad principles into*
13 *thee;* Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways
14 of darkness, *of perplexity, poverty, shame, and misery;* Who
rejoice to do evil, [and] delight in the frowardness of the wicked,
15 *that is, to make others as bad as themselves;* Whose ways [are]
crooked, and [they] froward in their paths; *who act contrary to*
16 *reason and understanding, and their true interest:* To deliver
thee from the strange woman, [even] from the stranger [which]
17 flattereth with her words, *that is, from lewd women;** Which

* As the Jewish law inflicted heavy punishments on those who committed fornication and adultery, it is probable that the Jews had harlots among them from the neighbouring nations, which seduced them to impurity and idolatry; and might be tolerated in some corrupt periods of their state. The case was the same at Athens, where foreign strumpets were tolerated. Hence this name *strange women* came to be applied to all bad women, whether foreigners or Israelites.

forsaketh the guide of her youth, *her husband, whom she chose as such,* and forgetteth the covenant of her God ; *her solemn vows*
18 *of fidelity, to which God was both a party and a witness.* For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead ; *the Hebrew is, to the giants, that is, sinners of the old world, who for*
19 *indulging fleshly lusts were swept down to hell by the flood.* None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. *An awful passage, intimating that it is very uncommon, and next to impossible, for impure sinners to be reclaimed. Wisdom will keep thee from these paths, and incline thee to a better*
20 *way ;* That thou mayest walk in the way of good [men.] and keep the paths of the righteous ; *the ways of the holy patriarchs*
21 *and prophets, and other righteous men.* For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it ; *enjoy the*
22 *good things of life, and peace with them.* But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it ; *their hopes from this world shall be disappointed, their families be extinct, and none left to preserve their memory.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us reflect on the importance of gaining wisdom, and the certainty of succeeding in the attempt, as a motive to diligence in the pursuit of it. It is of the utmost importance, as it will teach the fear and knowledge of God, which is the noblest science ; and lead us in the paths of religion, which are the most pleasant paths. We are likewise sure of success, for God will give wisdom. But he will not give it to the slothful ; we must take pains for it. Let us observe the expressions, we must *incline our ear, apply our hearts, lift up our voice, seek and search,* as men who dig in the mines ; we must exert all the powers of the soul ; must not be discouraged by any difficulties, but persevere in the attempt ; then the gain will amply repay all the toil and labour.

2. In order to make progress in religion, and experience its good effects, it is necessary that we take pleasure in it. It must enter into the heart, and be pleasant to the soul ; take possession of the affections, and be pursued and entertained with relish and delight ; yea, it must be preferred to every other gain and pleasure. Men neglect religion, or make very little improvement in it, because they come to it with reluctance ; do not take delight in it, but esteem it a task, and therefore find it a burden. Let us labour to conquer this unhappy aversion, and regard religion as our most important business and highest pleasure.

3. The study of wisdom, and the practice of piety, are the best securities against evil company and all its snares. The love of reading and study is very useful to all, especially to young minds, particularly when it is attended with a suitable disposition to receive and obey useful instructions. It will keep them from those that speak froward things, that would corrupt their minds, argue or laugh

them out of good principles, dispositions, and resolutions; from men that rejoice to do mischief, and take pleasure in the destruction of their fellow creatures. It will also keep them from the company of bad women, which is more dangerous still, for they have various charms and artifices to allure; and yet their abandoned characters ought, one would think, to deter every person from coming near them. If such should ever tempt young persons, let them remember those awful words, *none that go unto her return again;* it is a thousand to one that they are never recovered; for *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Finally, wisdom will incline them to walk with the righteous, in the ways of good men; to choose them for their friends and companions, to hearken to their advice, and follow their example; men, whose lives are honourable, whose end is peace, and whose glory will be eternal. Stand therefore in the paths of wisdom and piety; *ask for the good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*

CHAP. III.

Solomon goes on to recommend the study of wisdom, by the many benefits it brings; and cautions us against those things which are inconsistent with it.

1 MY son, *let me again entreat thee,* forget not my law: but
2. let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee; *a long,*
3 *healthful, and prosperous life.* Let not mercy and truth forsake thee, *but practise these duties:* bind them *as ornaments* about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; *keep them in*
4 *perpetual remembrance:* So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man; *when persons are governed by integrity, they generally find that a good interpreta-*
5 *tion is put upon their actions.* Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding, *that is, to thine own wisdom and skill, as if that were sufficient for thy direc-*
6 *tion and prosperity.* In all thy ways, *in all thy undertakings, public and private, daily and solemnly,* acknowledge him, and he shall
7 direct thy paths, *and protect and prosper thee in them.* Be not wise in thine own eyes, *to the neglect of the rule now given:* fear
8 the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, *or, as some render it, to thy flesh,* and marrow to thy bones; *it is*
9 *the way to obtain health of body and cheerfulness of mind.* Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine
10 increase; *with thy tythes, offerings, and first fruits.* So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with
11 new wine. My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD, *as if it was not worth regarding;* neither be weary of his correction; *afflictions are sent for some good end; they are very beneficial, and tokens of God's love, therefore be patient under them.*

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the
son [in whom] he delighteth.
13 Happy [is] the man [that] findeth wisdom, and the man
14 [that] getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it [is]
better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than
15 fine gold. She [is] more precious than rubies: and all the
things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her; *a
comparison peculiarly beautiful, considering how great their com-*
16 *merce was in Solomon's days.* Length of days [is] in her right
hand; [and] in her left hand riches and honour; *she comes to
thee like a wealthy princess, with her hands full of blessings.*
17 Her ways [are] ways of pleasantness, and all her paths [are]
18 peace; *present peace and eternal rest.* She [is] a tree of life to
them that lay hold upon her; *a principle of immortality and hap-
piness, alluding to the tree of life in paradise:* and happy [is every
one] that retaineth her; *which implies the difficulty of laying hold*
19 *of her, and of keeping that hold.* The LORD by wisdom hath found-
ed the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.
20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds
drop down the dew, *that is, the vapours arise from the sea and the
earth, and furnish a supply of rain; intimating, that wisdom makes
a man something like God, resembling him in knowledge and good-*
21 *ness.* My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep
22 sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life unto thy
23 soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way
safely, and thy foot shall not stumble; *thou shalt go about thy*
24 *business comfortably and successfully.* When thou liest down,
thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep
shall be sweet; *no anxious distracting cares or painful reflections*
25 *shall disturb thy repose.* Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the
desolation of the wicked, when it cometh; *of enemies and wicked*
26 *men, who are ready to lay all waste.* For the LORD shall be thy
confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken *by those
who lie in wait to destroy thee. And if thou desirest that God
should hear thy prayers, and help thee,*
27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is
28 in the power of thine hand to do [it.] Say not unto thy neigh-
bour, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou
hast it by thee; *not only pay thy just debts, but be kind and lib-
eral to those in distress; keep not any one in a cruel or unnecessary*
29 *suspense.* Devise not evil against thy neighbour, *against his
person, property or reputation,* seeing he dwelleth securely by
thee, *does not suspect thee, is off his guard, and therefore it were*
30 *greater baseness and wickedness to injure him.* Strive not with
a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm; *do not go
to law, or engage in quarrels, where there is no real or intended*
31 *injury, or none that is very great.* Envy thou not the oppressor,
32 and choose none of his ways, *though he thrives by them.* For the
froward [is] abomination to the LORD: but his secret [is] with
the righteous; *they are his friends and favourites.*

33 The curse of the LORD [is] in the house of the wicked:
34 but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth
the scorners, *will expose them to scorn and contempt:* but he
giveth grace unto the lowly, *that is, favour with himself and with*
35 *men.* The wise shall inherit glory, *though they may be dissatisfied for a while:* but shame shall be the promotion of fools; *shame shall render them conspicuous, and their folly will appear more remarkable and shameful by their exaltation.*

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter is so full of excellent instructions for the conduct of life, that every verse suggests them. Let us particularly attend to the following remarks.

1. The happy consequences of getting wisdom, should excite us diligently to pursue it. Solomon was so sensible of the weakness of human nature, of the importance of gaining wisdom, and how necessary it was that this should be inculcated again and again upon young people, that he urges it by a variety of arguments. The knowledge and practice of piety and virtue conduce to the health of the body, the peace of the mind, to our living upon good terms with others, and being respected by them. It tends to our success in business, and adds an additional charm to all the comforts of life; above all, it ensures the favour of God. How justly then does Solomon represent this as the best trade and merchandise! Let us therefore apply our minds to religion, that we may find, by our own experience, the truth of these observations. *Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.*

2. Humility and prayer are the best means of engaging the divine direction and blessing. The first maxim of importance to young people is, *not to be wise in their own eyes, nor lean to their own understandings.* Conceit makes them rash and contemptible, keeps them in ignorance, and makes them unwilling to submit to the rules and restraints of religion. But *God giveth grace to the lowly,* and therefore, sensible of our own weakness, let us trust in him; and by daily, serious prayer, *acknowledge him in all our ways,* especially in all affairs of difficulty and importance. We must not only believe that there is an overruling Providence, but seriously acknowledge it. Then will God direct us in the right way; and though we meet with affliction in it, it will end well, in everlasting peace and joy.

3. Let us learn how we are to behave under the afflictions of life. The apostle quotes the eleventh verse of this chapter, in *Heb.* xii. 5. and calls it *an exhortation that speaks to us as unto children.* This is an important hint, viz. that all these exhortations speak to us, as well as to those for whose immediate use Solomon wrote them. May we not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor think lightly of it, or that it is not sent with a good design, and capable of being very useful. Nor must we *be weary of it,* or, as the apostle says, *faint under it,* though it may be long continued. Though it should

grow heavier and heavier, we ought not to murmur, nor take unlawful methods to remove it: we should not think it more than we need, or that it is continued longer than is for our good. All proceeds from love; it is not the sword of an enemy, but the rod of a father; that is, a token of his love, and the means of his children's happiness.

4. We are taught the surest and readiest way of thriving in the world. Hearken, ye men of trade, to the exhortation of the wisest man and the greatest trader that ever lived; *the merchandise of wisdom is better than that of silver; and the gain thereof than fine gold. Honour the Lord with your substance;* do good with it, relieving the poor, and supporting the interests of religion. Honour him with your increase: as your substance increases, do the more good with it. This is the way to have his blessing, which *maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it.* When we have opportunities of doing good, we ought to embrace them quickly and readily; not bid our neighbour come again tomorrow. If he demand justice of us, a just debt, it is unjust to defer payment. If he solicit charity, it is barbarous to keep him in suspense; his wants may be urgent, and we may die before the morrow. Let us never study to find excuses for omitting or deferring to do good; for *God loveth a cheerful giver.*

5. We are here taught to guard against anxious fears; *be not afraid of sudden fear,* which is indeed apt to put a man into confusion, because he has not time to recollect himself. But this is a disposition we should strive against, for our own sakes, and the honour of religion. It is very weak to give way to every little alarm, or to believe every story which foolish and wicked men may spread. It is also very unbecoming those who profess to believe, that *the Lord reigneth. Be not afraid of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh,* much less when it is at a distance, and least of all when it is only suspected or rumoured. The Lord is the confidence of his people, and therefore they should not fear. But if they dishonour him and his providence by their unbelief, it may provoke him to give them up a prey to their own tormenting fears, and thus make their lives very miserable. *Fear the Lord* then *and depart from evil,* and fear nothing else.

CHAP. IV.

Solomon here continues his exhortations to all, especially to young people, whom he addresses with the tender concern of a father.

1 HEAR, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend
2 to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, *not a trifling, indifferent matter, but what is absolutely necessary for your peace and happiness;* forsake ye not my law. *To recommend these instructions he relates that they were such as he*
3 *received from his pious father.* For I was my father's son, ten-

der and only [beloved] in the sight of my mother. He taught
me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words:
5 keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get under-
standing, *labour, traffic for it, that is, seek it as diligently as men
do the wealth and honours of this world*; forget [it] not; neither
6 decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she
shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee, *as thy sur-
7 est, strongest guard.* Wisdom [is] the principal thing; [there-
fore] get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.
8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to
9 honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine
head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver
to thee. *Thus far he seems to repeat David's instruction to him;*
10 *he then goes on,* Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and
11 the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the
12 way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When
thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou
runnest, thou shalt not stumble; *wisdom will deliver thee from
intricacies and perplexities, which thou wouldst otherwise fall
into. Religion is an easy and safe thing. A mind under the influ-
ence of irregular passions is straitened: as a man, whose shoe is
too tight, is galled, and the speed, the ease, and the gracefulness of
13 his motion spoiled.* Take fast hold of instruction; let [her] not
14 go: keep her; for she [is] thy life. Enter not into the path
15 of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil [men.] Avoid it,
pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away; *a beautiful climax
or gradation; stay not in the path, go not into it, even for a little
while to make experiment; avoid entering upon it, come not near
16 it, go any other way rather than that.* For they sleep not, except
they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless
17 they cause [some] to fall; *they have no satisfaction till they have
accomplished their wicked designs.* For they eat the bread of
wickedness and drink the wine of violence; *they subsist on ill
gotten gain; wickedness is meat, drink, and sleep to them, all their
18 business and pleasure.* But the path of the just [is] as the shin-
ing light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;
*a wise man makes progress in religion, and he finds its pleasure
increasing; as the rising sun shines brighter and brighter till it
19 comes to the perfection of its lustre.* The way of the wicked [is]
as darkness: they know not at what they stumble; *little acci-
dents bring mischief upon them; events which they never thought
of, and which there was no probability of their falling into.*
20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my say-
21 ings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the
22 midst of thine heart. For they [are] life unto those that find
them, and health to all their flesh; *a remedy under all their griefs
23 and troubles.* Keep thy heart with all diligence, *guard it more
cautiously than any thing else;* for out of it [are] the issues of
life; *the heart is the spring of action, and thy actions will be good
or bad as thy heart is; and this care will end in life and happi-*

24 ness. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips
put far from thee; *every thing contrary to sobriety, charity, de-*
25 *cency, and religion.* Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine
eyelids look straight before thee; *let not thine attention ramble*
to every object, but keep one great end in view; and then go on
26 *steadily and resolutely, without being diverted from it.* Ponder
the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established, *or, all*
27 *thy ways shall be ordered aright.* Turn not to the right hand nor
to the left, *shun all extremes, (Eccl.* vii. 16, 17.) remove thy foot
from evil.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the wisdom and advantage of giving good instructions to children. Solomon was tenderly beloved by his father and mother; and observe how they shewed their affection, not by neglecting and humouring him, but by catechizing and instructing him. The true way in which parents ought to show their love to their children, is to teach them the excellency of wisdom and piety; to inculcate it upon them again and again, with warmth and importunity. The happy consequence of this will be, that they will be likely to remember their instructions, as Solomon did, and take care to impress them on their own children. It is an important argument for giving children a good education, that *they will teach their children.* Thus will religion be kept up in families, and in the world.

2. Let all, and especially young men, *avoid evil company.* How strongly does Solomon caution against this. If we knew that the plague was in a house, we should avoid it; not only not stay in it, but not go into it; we should not stand near it, nor pass by it, but go some other way. These expressions show the great danger there is of being entangled before we are aware; and what great caution is necessary. Let us shun then the society of the wicked, for *a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

3. If we desire to be holy and happy, we must *keep our hearts with all diligence;* to begin with the government of the thoughts and affections, watch over the workings of the mind, and keep it with more care than any thing else. There is a very important reason given for this, *for out of it are the issues of life.* Our living well or ill depends upon this very thing; and our lives will either be good or bad, as this watchfulness over the heart is kept up or neglected.

4. We see wherein true wisdom consists. What excellent rules for our conduct in this life and preparation for a better, are contained in the close of this chapter! In choosing the right end, we should act with caution and deliberation; before we resolve on any action or scheme, let us view it narrowly, be exact and critical in considering its nature and consequences, then pursue it steadily, without wavering, or suffering other objects to interrupt us. By these methods we see men prosper in this world; and the like pru-

dence, forethought, and steadiness is necessary in the care of the soul; and it is peculiarly necessary for young people to acquire a habit of this. Let us then be careful that we *walk circumspectly; not as fools, but as wise men.*

CHAP. V.

Solomon here repeats his cautions to young people, and particularly warns them against uncleanness.

1 MY son, attend unto my wisdom, [and] bow thine ear to
2 my understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion
thyself, [and that] thy lips may keep knowledge, *and be able to*
3 *instruct others.* For the lips of a strange woman drop [as] an
honeycomb, and her mouth [is] smoother than oil; *she has*
4 *many arts of address:* But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp
5 as a two edged sword, *wounding both body and soul.* Her feet
go down to death; her steps take hold on hell, *lead to ruin in*
6 *both worlds.* Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her
ways are moveable, [that] thou canst not know [them;] *her chief*
design is to keep thee from considering; she knows how to vary
the method of address, according to the temper of the person she
has to do with; sometimes soothing, and sometimes frowning.
7 Hear me now, therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the
8 words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come
9 not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour
unto others, *bring disease and untimely death on thyself*, and thy
years unto the cruel;* *thy strength and the flower of thy age to*
10 *harlots, who are cruel both in principles and practices:* Lest
strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours [be] in the
11 house of a stranger; And thou mourn at the last, when thy
12 flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated in-
13 struction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed
the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that in-
14 structed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the con-
gregation and assembly; *I arrived to such a pitch of wickedness,*
that I had lost common shame, so that I could say and do many
lascivious and indecent things before large companies; which a
man of common sense and decency, though he had no religion, would
be ashamed of. Solomon then recommends marriage, as one reme-
dy against fleshly lusts; which he describes in a beautiful figure,
alluding to the scarcity of water in those hot countries, which made
the property of a well very valuable.
15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out
of thine own well; *intimating that there was as much greater*
pleasure in an agreeable wife than in those forbidden lusts, as there

* This phrase may be understood of the revenge of the husband, who in those countries might put the adulterer to death.

was in drinking pure water out of a clean well, than dirty water
16 *out of a kennel.* Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, [and]
rivers of waters in the streets; *the children which flow from this*
fountain thou mayest bring abroad in public, without reproach;
place them in families of their own, and see a progeny descending
17 *from them, like pure streams from a fountain.* Let them be only
thine own, and not strangers' with thee; *as if he had said, If*
thou wilt indulge thyself in unlawful freedoms, thou wilt set thy own
wife a bad example, by following which she may destroy the cer-
18 *tainty of thy offspring.* Let thy fountain be blessed, *or a bless-*
ing to thee: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth, *take delight*
19 *in her company and converse.* [Let her be as] the loving hind
and pleasant roe; *alluding to a custom which still prevails in the*
east, of having young fawns kept in their houses for their children
to play with: let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be
thou ravished always with her love, *that is, let her be the subject*
20 *of thy thoughts and the object of thy wishes.* And why wilt thou,
my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the
21 bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man [are] before the
eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings; *he sees, and*
will severely punish flagrant lusts. Conscience will likewise punish
him if he thus go astray, for
22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall
be holden with the cords of his sins, *so that he cannot disentangle*
23 *himself when he desires and attempts it.* He shall die without
instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray;
this sin hath an unhappy tendency to make men incorrigible, and
(like travellers wandering from the right way) to precipitate
themselves into unexpected ruin.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see what a friend to sobriety and religion consideration is. Solomon represents it as the design of artful sinners to keep those whom they seduce, or would seduce, from *pondering the path of life*, and endeavours to stupify their understandings. Religion would be minded, and sin avoided, if men would but look about them, and consider the nature and consequences of their conduct. It is therefore the artifice of Satan and his agents to hurry young men on in a round of gaiety and dissipation; and thus to keep them from serious thought. And this is the great mischief that modern diversions do; they banish consideration; and when that is effected, men become an easy prey to every deceiver.

2. The time will come when thoughtless sinners will mourn and lament. They are now jovial and merry; think religion too strict; ministers too precise; and their admonitions mere bugbears, intended only to frighten them from pleasure. But the period is hastening on when they will most certainly be of another mind; especially *when the flesh and body are consumed*, and they sick and

dying. Then they will mourn; and none will mourn more bitterly than the children of good parents, who have been both instructed and reproved. They will then remember the instructions they before neglected, and the reproofs they before despised; and will wish that they had acted otherwise. If therefore it is our desire to *remove evil from our flesh, and sorrow from our heart*, let us *ponder the path of our feet, and choose the way of life.*

3. Let this chapter be a warning to all, and especially to young people, against the lusts of the flesh. Many are watching for your destruction, both artful women, and wicked men, who would tempt you to impurity, by smooth speeches and fair promises. *Their lips drop as the honeycomb, but there is poison in them:* and if you are seduced, you are likely to lose your health, your substance, your credit, your peace, and your souls. As the best antidote against their artifices, remember *v.* 21. *the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings;* no darkness can hide them; and however light men may make of such crimes, (which it seems to be the design of most modern plays and romances, at least to palliate) the eternal and almighty God hath declared, that *whoremongers and adulterers he will judge;* and that *they shall all have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Therefore, dearly beloved, I beseech you as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.*

CHAP. VI.

1 MY son, if thou be surety for thy friend, [if] thou hast
stricken thy hand with a stranger, *art bound for him to his*
2 *creditors*, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art
taken with the words of thy mouth; *hast brought thyself into*
3 *trouble, and art wretchedly hampered.* Do this now, my son, and
deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend;
go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend; *earnestly entreat*
him to take some course for thy safety by paying the debt, or getting
4 *some other security.* Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber
5 to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand [of the
hunter,] and as a bird from the hand of the fowler, *for thou mayest be arrested and ruined, when thou dost not expect it.*
6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:
7 Which having no guide *to direct it*, overseer *to enact law*, or
8 ruler *to punish idleness*, Provideth her meat in the summer, [and]
gathereth her food in the harvest, *and lays it up secure against*
winter. Thou hast nobler capacities, and much greater business
9 *to do, than the ants, therefore* How long wilt thou sleep, O slug-
10 gard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? *saying*, [Yet] a
little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep;
wanting to indulge thyself a little more, and yet a little more, un-
11 *willing to rise and apply thyself to thy proper business:* So shall

thy poverty come as one that travelleth *step by step, so that thou canst scarce perceive him move*, and thy want, *when it arrives, will seize thee* as an armed man, *against whom thou canst make no resistance.*

12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward
13 mouth; *maintains himself by lies, flattery and slander.* He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; *he has private signs to instruct his accomplices how*
14 *they are to play their part;* Frowardness [is] in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord *in families and*
15 *nations, hoping to find his account in it.* Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

16 These six [things] doth the LORD hate: yea, seven [are] an
17 abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands
18 that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, *to gratify his appetites, his covetousness, or revenge*, feet
19 that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *in judgment* [that] speaketh lies, *that is, perjures himself*, and him that soweth discord among brethren; *between near relations, where there ought to be mutual affection.*

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the
21 law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, [and] tie them about thy neck; *fix them on thy mind, keep them continually before thine eyes, and thou wilt find constant benefit by*
22 *it.* When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and [when] thou awakest, it shall talk with thee; *true religion will be a guide, a guard, and a pleasant companion, and suggest proper and comfortable meditations to thee in*
23 *the night.* For the commandment [is] a lamp; and the law [is] light; and reproofs of instruction [are] the way of life; *they will direct thee in every circumstance of life: and will be particu-*
24 *larly of use* To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman, *which a prudent education, and even moral precepts, are not always able to do.*

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take
26 thee with her eyelids; *talk not of her smiles and charms;* For by means of a whorish woman [a man is brought] to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life; *she*
27 *not only destroys the estate, but health and life itself.* Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? *at least*
28 *blackened, which a wise man would not choose.* Can one go upon
29 hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent;
30 *it will bring guilt, shame and sorrow upon him.* [Men] do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; *he is not reckoned so infamous, nor do men rigorously punish him,*
31 *but rather pity and forgive him:* But [if] he be found, he shall restore seven fold, *that is, many fold*, he shall give all the substance of his house *rather than be exposed to public prosecution.*

32 [But] whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh under-
33 standing: he [that] doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound
and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped
away; *adultery is much more infamous than theft: it is an ever-
lasting brand of disgrace, beside the fatal consequences which at-*
34 *tend the jealousy of the husband.* For jealousy [is] the rage of a
35 man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He
will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though
thou givest many gifts; *he will prosecute the adulterer even unto
death, (as by the law of Moses he might) and no pecuniary recom-
pense will satisfy him.*

REFLECTION.

WE may observe, that this chapter contains abundance of excellent cautions to young people, against the errors into which they are prone to fall. Let them avoid entering into bonds and promises for others. In some cases it may be an act of justice or charity; but persons should be cautious who they engage for; and not engage for more than they are willing to pay, and can pay without injury to their families. But prudence will generally require young people to avoid such engagements. Idleness is another temptation to which they are exposed, and the want of forecast and frugality. Being provided for by their parents, they are apt to be extravagant; forgetting that the time of youth and strength, is the time to make provision for families, for sickness, and old age. But they are most in danger from fleshly lusts. They are ready to imagine that they are secure from gross acts of vice; but are often led into them before they are aware. They think they may keep company, at least stay a while with men and women of vicious characters, without danger; but this is as ridiculous and absurd, as it would be for *a man to put fire into his bosom*, or *go upon hot coals*, *v.* 27, 28. When once men have brought themselves into straits by idleness, extravagance, or impurity, then they are tempted to lying, doing mischief, sowing discord, perjury, and all those things that the Lord hates. Now to prevent all these, the grand direction is to be ruled by the law of God; the study of it and meditation upon it, are at once the best security against vice and a source of the noblest pleasures. Such remarks as these cannot be closed without lamenting over this wicked land of ours. Instead of pitying, and dealing gently with a thief, he is transported, or hanged; while adulterers and adulteresses, whom the law of God commands to be surely put to death, are not only spared, and go unpunished, but are scarce reckoned infamous; are put on the same level, in places of public resort, with the chaste and virtuous; yea, if the truth is reported, in many of our gay assemblies, are treated more respectfully than they. Such is our politeness, wisdom, and piety! *It is time, O Lord, for thee to work, for men make void thy law.*

CHAP. VII.

Solomon here renews his cautions to all, especially to his young readers, against fleshly lusts, with regard to which they need line upon line.

1 MY son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments
2 with thee, *as thy best treasure.* Keep my command-
ments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye, *that is, with the greatest care; as if he had said, Thou hadst better loose thine eyes, and live in darkness, than that thy mind should be with-*
3 *out wisdom.* Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the
4 table of thine heart; *have them always ready for use.* Say unto wisdom, Thou [art] my sister; and call understanding [thy] kinswoman; *grow into such an intimate acquaintance and friend-ship with them, as persons usually have with their near relations.*
5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger [which] flattereth with her words; *to comply with whose solicitations there might be great temptations amidst the luxury of Solomon's reign. To enforce the caution, he relates an account of a thoughtless young man, who was seduced and ruined*
6 *by a wicked woman.* For at the window of my house I looked
7 through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understand-
8 ing, *a giddy, unexperienced young fellow,* Passing through the
9 street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night; *it was in the twilight that I saw it, but to him it proved a black and*
10 *dark night.* And, behold, there met him a woman [with] the attire of an harlot, *a gay, airy dress, not used by modest women,*
11 and subtile of heart. (She [is] loud, *talks and laughs loud; a pretty sure mark of an immodest, at least of a weak mind;* and stubborn, *she will not be advised and controled;* her feet abide not in her house; *she loves gadding abroad, and any thing but*
12 *family business:* Now [is she] without, now in the streets, and
13 lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed
14 him, [and] with an impudent face said unto him, [I have] peace
15 offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.* There-
fore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and
16 I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of
17 tapestry, with carved [works,] with fine linen of Egypt. I have
18 perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace
19 ourselves with loves. For the good man [is] not at home; *acknowledging herself to be a married woman, but making light of that; she does not call him her husband, but the good man, or the man of the house, whom they call my husband;* he is gone a long journey, *and will stay a long time, therefore there is no danger*

* It is generally understood by this verse, that she kept up some forms of religion. But as part of the peace offerings were to be eaten at home, it may only intimate, that she had a great deal of good provisions in her house.

20 *of his discovering it.* He hath taken a bag of money with him,
21 [and] will come home at the day appointed. With her much
fair speech she caused him to yield; with the flattering of her
lips she forced him, *notwithstanding some reluctance from his own*
22 *conscience.* He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to
23 the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till
a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare,
24 and knoweth not that it [is] for his life.* Hearken unto me now
therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.
25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her
paths; *do not show any inclination to go near her; do not hearken*
26 *to her, but check the first rising of temptation.* For she hath cast
down many wounded: yea, many strong [men] have been slain
by her; *there are many melancholy instances of this in Lot, Sam-*
27 *son, David, and others, which are intended for our warning.* Her
house, *however it may be decked with ornaments,* [is] the way to
hell, going down to the chambers of death, *that is, to the grave*
and everlasting destruction.†

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may hence learn, the regard we should show to wisdom, namely, to keep it as the most valuable treasure, to have its dictates familiar to our minds, and, by frequent meditation, ready for our use. A superficial knowledge of divine things, a general acquaintance with them only, will not be sufficient: by this alone we shall not perceive their beauty and excellence, whatever degrees of religious knowledge we have gained. May we *keep it as the apple of the eye;* be very tender of it, that nothing may injure it or deprive us of it: this is the way to be secure against temptation. They are those who are *void of understanding* that are corrupted and destroyed: whereas, *to keep the commandments of God,* is the way to live comfortably and to secure everlasting life.

2. How desirable is it for all, especially the young, to consider the consequences of their actions! when any pleasures solicit them, to consider how they will end. When the temptation is proposed, every thing looks charming and pleasant; but if they would only consider the dart which will strike them through, that anguish of conscience which forbidden pleasures will bring; and that place of torment to which they lead, they would not comply. Oh let our young friends therefore be cautious, not high minded, but fear: let

* What we render, *as a fool to the correction of the stocks,* a learned critic would render, *as the deer stippeth into the toil,* which the huntsman setteth to entrap him. There is a beautiful gradation in the motion of the three animals here mentioned; the ox, the deer, and the bird; each goes swifter than the other, and so it represents the increasing speed with which the young sinner is hurried on to his ruin, till he feels himself mortally wounded, and it is too late to go back.

† Mr. Henry observes, that this story would serve the licentious poets and playwriters of our age to make a comedy on. The harlot, with them would be the heroine, and the audience would be much diverted with her method of decoying the young squire; and those who saw it acted, would go away and be glad to be so picked up. Thus fools make a mock at sin. But Solomon tells it, and all wise men will *read* and *hear* it as a very melancholy story, and what should excite their caution.

them not boast of their strength and resolution, for, *v.* 26. *She hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her.* Therefore *watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

3. When sinners take so much pains to allure and seduce others, what pity is it that wise and good men will take so little to preserve or recover them. What pains is the harlot here represented as taking to corrupt! to procure every thing alluring, to make the temptation plausible, to answer every objection which the person tempted might be apt to make; and all to make another more and more a child of hell. Where do we see such zeal as this in good men! Where do we see such a concern to direct unexperienced souls! to seek out, take notice of, and encourage, those who appear to be serious; to warn them of the snares of sin; to represent to them the pleasures of religion; and exhort them *to taste and see that the Lord is good?* The artifices and zeal of sinners ought to shame and humble us, that we do no more for one another's souls, and take so little pains to warn, admonish, and encourage one another; especially since so much is to be said in favour of religion, and we may hope for the concurrence of divine grace in our pious attempts to promote it. *He that turneth a sinner from the error of his ways, saveth a soul from death. Therefore exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

CHAP. VIII.

In this chapter there is an evident contrast or opposition to the allurements of the harlot mentioned in the former chapter.

1 DOTH not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her
2 voice; *earnestly invite men to receive her?* She standeth
in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.
3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming
in at the doors; *in the most public places, in open day; not like the harlot, ashamed to be seen; her instructions are plain to all.*
4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice [is] to the sons of man.
5 O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an
6 understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent, *or princely*, things, *worthy the attention of all;* and the opening of
7 my lips [shall be] right things. For my mouth shall speak
truth; and wickedness [is] an abomination to my lips, *it is the*
8 *design of all my addresses to prevent it.* All the words of my
mouth [are] in righteousness; [there is] nothing froward or
perverse in them; *nothing to hamper or perplex you, to abridge you of your just liberty, much less to mislead or pervert you.*
9 They [are] all plain to him that understandeth, and right to
them that find knowledge; *who are well disposed, and endeav-*

10 *our to distinguish between right and wrong.* Receive my instruc-
tion, and not silver, *that is, rather than silver;* and knowledge rath-
11 er than choice gold. For wisdom [is] better than rubies, *or*
the most precious gems; and all the things that may be desired
12 are not to be compared to it. I wisdom dwell with prudence,
do not content myself with speculation, but extend to practice, and
find out knowledge of witty inventions, *that is, ingenious inven-*
tions, which are of great use in human life, and subservient to the
most important purposes. I instruct men in the first place, that
13 The fear of the LORD [is] to hate evil, pride, and arrogancy, and
the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate, *all sinful prac-*
14 *tices, slander, and detraction.* Counsel [is] mine, and sound
wisdom; I [am] understanding; I have strength; *I show*
men what is fit to be done, and inspire them with courage to do it.
15 16 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me
princes rule, and nobles, [even] all the judges of the earth; *that*
is, by wisdom they make just and merciful laws for the government
of their people, and conduct the weighty affairs of kingdoms and na-
17 *tions.* I love them that love me; and those that seek me early
18 shall find me. Riches and honour [are] with me; [yea,] durable
riches and righteousness, *wealth which wears well, and brings*
19 *with it a title to a better inheritance.* My fruit [is] better than
gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.
20 I lead, *or direct,* in the way of *private* righteousness, in the
21 midst of the paths of *public* judgment. That I may cause
those that love me to inherit substance, *make them truly and com-*
22 *pletely happy;* and I will fill their treasures.* The LORD pos-
sessed me *as his treasure* in the beginning of his way, before
his works of old; *it is an argument that wisdom is the most ex-*
cellent thing, because it dwelt in God before the creation of the
world, and directed his actions in all he made. As if he had said,
Since it is an attribute displayed in all his works of creation and
providence, therefore, the more wisdom any creature has, the more
23 *he resembles the great Creator.* I was set up from everlasting,
24 from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When [there
were] no depths, I was brought forth; [when there were]
25 no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains
26 were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as
yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest
part of the dust of the world, *the ground on which we tread,*
or rather, the beginning or mass of dust, before it was distin-
27 *guished into mountains and plains.* When he prepared the heav-
ens, I [was] there: when he set a compass upon the face of the
depth; *marked how far it should extend, and where the hills*
28 *should be placed;* When he established the clouds above: when
29 he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to
the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his command-

* Many writers apply all that follows to Christ. What the New Testament teaches concerning him, shows that it may be accommodated to him; but I find no sufficient proof that Solomon intended it of him; nor is any clause of this description applied to him in the New Testament.

30 ment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then
I was by him [as] one brought up [with him:] and I was daily
[his] delight, rejoicing always before him; *producing daily some*
31 *new work, which he approved and pronounced to be good;* Rejoicing
in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights [were] with
the sons of men; *I rejoiced to see how the world was formed into*
a fit habitation for man, and the sons of men enjoying the effects of
32 *the divine power and goodness.* Now therefore hearken unto
me, O ye children: for blessed [are they that] keep my ways.
33, 34 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed
[is] the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, wait-
ing at the posts of my doors; *earnestly desiring to become my*
35 *disciple, and improving all opportunities to get knowledge.* For
whoso findeth me findeth life, *that which will make life pleasant*
36 *to him,* and *he* shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that
sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate
me love death; *they who hearken to sinners, and reject my coun-*
sels, do in effect choose death; and their perverseness will end in
their ruin.

REFLECTIONS.

1. FROM hence we are led to observe and adore the wisdom of God, as it is displayed in his works. We should take notice of their beauty, order, and exactness; and consider that it is he, who hath prepared and adorned the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, set a bound to the sea, and provided sustenance for man and beast. The more attentively we survey the works of God, the more evident and striking marks of wisdom and goodness shall we perceive; and often take up the psalmist's admiration, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.*

2. The noble description here given of the effects of wisdom, should increase our esteem of, and value for it. Wisdom, will lead us to choose the best ends, and to pursue them by the best means, and therefore comprehends the knowledge of our duty, the fear of God and a hatred of evil. This wisdom is the greatest excellency of a rational being. It is to be preferred to gold and rubies, and every thing the heart of man can desire. It brings us substance; what is solid and durable, and will afford us the highest and noblest delight. It directs in the government of kingdoms, churches, and families; discovers the useful arts of life, and especially ennobles, enriches, and sanctifies the soul. It is absolutely necessary for all the sons of men; all their learning and wealth, without this, will only make them so much the more contemptible and miserable. Let us all then, especially those who are in early life, pursue it; for *wisdom loves those that love her, and those that seek her early shall find her.*

3. How inexcusable and miserable will they be *who hate wisdom!* Inexcusable, because it is offered them, and the way to possess it is

plainly marked out. Conscience, Providence, ministers, good books, and above all, the scriptures, propose it to our choice, and direct us in the way to attain it. It is easily found by unprejudiced minds; but it must be sought daily and diligently, if we whould come to a thorough knowledge of it, and be well skilled in those excellent arts which it teaches. But if this wisdom be neglected, the soul is wronged, whatever else it enjoys; and death, everlasting death, must be its portion. Hearken then to wisdom, for *blessed are they that keep her ways.*

CHAP. IX.

This chapter contains a description of wisdom and folly, as persons sending their invitations to mankind; and the different reception of their respective guests. These seem to be detached pieces, which Solomon might write and give to young people about his court, to instruct them in the same thing, by a variety of language and images, according to the manner of the easterns. He here describes wisdom as a princess, making a splendid entertainment for her guests.

1 WISDOM hath builded her house, she hath hewn out
her seven pillars; *in allusion to the custom of the east-*
ern princes, who entertained their guests in gardens, where pavil-
2 *ions or tents were spread upon a number of pillars:* She hath
killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine *of various kinds;*
3 she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her
maidens:* she crieth upon the highest places of the city,
4 Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither; *I am willing to re-*
ceive the weakest and the vilest: [as for] him that wanteth un-
5 derstanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and
drink of the wine [which] I have mingled, *that is, hear my in-*
structions, and receive my consolations: and in order to this,
6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understand-
ing. *And my first lesson is, that to despise reproof is a most hate-*
7 *ful character:* He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself
shame, *by being disappointed:* and he that rebuketh a wicked
[man, getteth] himself a blot, *by being censured and reproached.*
8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man,
9 and he will love thee. Give [instruction] to a wise [man,] and
he will be yet wiser: teach a just [man,] and he will increase
10 in learning. The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wis-
dom; and the knowledge of the holy, *that is, of holy things, the*
11 *doctrines and services of religion,* [is] understanding. For by
me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall
12 be increased. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself:
but [if] thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear [it;] *I shall receive*

* A circumstance of decorum, as it would have been reckoned an infamous thing in those countries for a lady to be attended by men servants.

neither benefit by the one, nor prejudice by the other; it is thine own interest which is solely concerned.

13 A foolish woman, *that is, folly, the contrast of true wisdom,* [is] clamorous: [she is] simple, and knoweth nothing; *she speaks in a loud, imprudent manner, but is perfectly ignorant of God and re-*
14 *ligion.* For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the
15 high places of the city, To call passengers who go right on their ways; *who pursue their business, or are going to the place*
16 *where they might receive instruction:* Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither; *using the same language as wisdom, and urging the great pleasure arising from prohibited gratifications:* and [as for]
17 him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters, *or pleasures,* are sweet, and bread [eaten] in secret is
18 pleasant. But *to comply with her invitation would be destructive, for* he knoweth not that the dead [are] there; [and that] her guests [are] in the depths of hell; *not only the bodies of those who had been murdered in their criminal pursuits, or died martyrs to their lusts, but the spirits of the damned come to the entertainment, assembling as it were to seize their prey, and conduct the sinner down to the depths of hell.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may learn to judge of our own character, by the manner in which we receive reproof. If we hate those who reprove us, blame them, despise them, call them uncharitable, or impertinent, it shows that we are fools and scorners; but if we love a faithful reprover, take his rebuke well, apply our minds to grow wiser by it, and correct the error which he reproves, it is a sure mark of wisdom, and the way to grow better. Let us try ourselves then by this mark, for, *v.* 12, *if thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*

2. How desirable is it that young people should make a wise choice! Wisdom and folly, holiness and sin, each address them, and solicit their compliance. O that they would examine the proposals of each, but always remember to take into the account future consequences. Wisdom's address is mild and rational, she proposes your benefit, and only requires you to forsake what will be your destruction. But carnal and criminal pleasures are noisy and pressing; they promise you much delight in forbidden enjoyments; but *the dead are there;* and if you are the guests of folly, the entertainment will end in the depths of hell. Thus does Solomon set before them, thus do faithful monitors and friends, *set before them life and death, the blessing and the curse; forsake then the foolish and live.*

CHAP. X.

The former chapters were but by way of preface to recommend what follows to our practice. Here begin those choice and pithy sentences, called proverbs, and which are too unconnected to admit of reflections on the contents of each chapter.

1 THE proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad
father: but a foolish son [is] the heaviness of his mother.
2 Treasures of wickedness, *that is, the treasures of wicked men, especially those gotten by wickedness,* profit nothing: but right-
eousness delivereth from death, *from the judgments consequent*
3 *upon wickedness and from eternal death.* The LORD will not
suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away
the substance of the wicked; *he will seize it as the property of*
4 *an enemy and make a spoil of it.* He becometh poor that dealeth
[with] a slack, *that is, with an idle and deceitful* hand: but the
hand of the diligent maketh rich, *both as to the world and the*
5 *soul.* He that gathereth in summer, *who improves his opportu-*
nities, [is] a wise son: [but] he that sleepeth in harvest [is] a
son that causeth shame; *he loses the benefit he might enjoy, and*
6 *will be a disgrace to his friends.* Blessings [are] upon the head
of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; *an*
allusion to laying on the hand in blessing, and covering the face of a
7 *criminal when executed.* The memory of the just [is] blessed;
though obscure while he lives, though slandered, yet shall he be
spoken of with praise: but the name of the wicked shall rot; *it*
8 *shall survive them, but it shall be regarded with abhorrence.* The
wise in heart will receive commandments; *esteem it a privilege*
and a favour to be taught: but a prating fool shall fall; *one who*
loves to hear himself talk shall fall into troubles and be undone.
9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely; *he is easy and happy*
in the divine approbation, and the consciousness of his own integri-
ty; but he that perverteth his ways, *who useth indirect methods,*
10 shall be known *and discovered.* He that winketh with the eye,
who gives signs to his accomplices to do a man mischief while he is
speaking him fair, causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.
11 The mouth of a righteous [man is] a well of life; *wholesome,*
instructive words spring up as naturally as good water in a well,
refreshing and strengthening all about him: but violence covereth
12 the mouth of the wicked. Hatred stirreth up strifes; *malicious,*
ill natured people, by slander and talebearing raise disturbances,
and make people quarrel about trifles: but love covereth all
sins; *overlooks and conceals, or extenuates and makes the best of*
13 *them.* In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is
found; *he shows it by his speech:* but a rod [is] for the back of
him that is void of understanding; *nothing but correction will*
14 *teach a fool his duty.* Wise [men] lay up knowledge, *continually*
and safely, as a treasure: but the mouth of the foolish [is] near
destruction, *by venting unseasonably all he knows, to his own mis-*

15 *chief.* The rich man's wealth [is] his strong city ; *he thinks it will defend him against many of the evils of life :* the destruction of the poor [is] their poverty ; *wicked men take advantage to oppress and ruin them ; or, poverty fills them with fear and des-*
16 *pair, and so is the cause of their ruin.* The labour of the righteous [tendeth] to life ; *wisdom and goodness make a man's life a blessing to himself and others :* the fruit of the wicked to sin ; *wicked men abuse it, and turn it into a curse, make it an occasion*
17 *of guilt and ruin.* He [is in] the way of life that keepeth instruction ; but he that refuseth reproof, *when offered to him,*
18 erreth, *wanders out of the way of life.* He that hideth hatred [with] lying *or flattering* lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is
19 a fool ; *shows a bad heart, however wise he may seem.* In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin ; *a man that is talkative will often sin :* but he that refraineth his lips, *who hath prudence to consider when and how and to whom he speaks,* [is]
20 wise. The tongue of the just [is as] choice silver ; *when he speaks in his common and ordinary manner what he utters is of weight and worth :* the heart of the wicked [is] little worth, *consequently his speech is so, even when he has studied what to say.*
21 The lips of the righteous feed many, *make others wise ;* but fools die for want of wisdom ; *they lose their very lives and their eternal*
22 *happiness too.* The blessing of the LORD *on the hand of the diligent,* it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it ; *ill gotten riches are attended with regret, cares, and discontent, an evil conscience,*
23 *and fear of discovery and a future reckoning.* [It is] as sport to a fool to do mischief ; *it is a pleasure to him, he does it with a gay air and without reflection :* but a man of understanding hath wisdom ; *or, so is wisdom to a man of understanding, he taketh pleas-*
24 *ure in it.* The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him ; *he hath his fears, but not more than he has reason for ; let his imagination be ever so lively, all that he fears shall come upon him :* but the desire of the righteous shall be granted, *that is, his grand, leading desire, the favour of God and eternal happiness.*
25 As the whirlwind passeth, so [is] the wicked no [more ;] *though he may for a while make a great bustle, like a whirlwind :* but the righteous [is] an everlasting foundation ; *his hope and happiness*
26 *is in the divine righteousness and faithfulness.* As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, *which is troublesome and painful,* so [is] the sluggard to them that send him ; *he neither delivers his message faithfully, performs his business exactly, nor hastens*
27 *back again.* The fear of the LORD prolongeth days : but the years of the wicked shall be shortened, *naturally and judicially.*
28 The hope of the righteous [shall be] gladness ; *shall be answered, and occasion joy :* but the expectation of the wicked shall perish ; *shall be disappointed, and give so much the more sorrow*
29 *on that account.* The way of the LORD [is] strength to the upright, *that goes on securely and courageously ; his work is easy and delightful :* but destruction [shall be] to the workers of in-
30 iquity. The righteous shall never be removed ; *his soul shall be*

kept in peace, and his happiness be secure : but the wicked shall
31 not inhabit the earth. The mouth of the just bringeth forth
wisdom : but the froward tongue shall be cut out, *or cut off.*
32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable ; *he knows the proper time and manner of speaking, what is acceptable to men, and not displeasing to God ; he studies to please as far as is consistent with truth and friendship :* but the mouth of the wicked [speaketh] frowardness ; *he loves to vent his own spleen, though very distasteful to others. Let us avoid this, and remember, that these several maxims relating to the government of the tongue, show its importance, and how carefully it should be attended to.*

CHAP. XI.

1 A FALSE balance [is] abomination to the LORD ; *it is peculiarly abominable, as it is cheating under a pretence of*
2 *doing right :* but a just weight [is] his delight. [When] pride
cometh, then cometh shame, *being shameful in itself, and exposes them to shame :* but with the lowly [is] wisdom ; *which is pleasing to God and man, and makes them easy and comfortable in them-*
3 *selves.* The integrity of the upright shall guide them : but the
perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them : *if a man comes to a resolution to preserve strict integrity, that will direct him and make his way plain ; it is easy to determine what is fair and honourable. But when the question is, What mean, dishonourable things may be done without discovery ? a scene is open for perplexity ; and men of great subtilty and refinement are oftenest*
4 *entangled, exposed, and ruined.* Riches profit not in the day of
wrath : but righteousness delivereth from death ; *from second*
5 *death, and makes the first comfortable.* The righteousness of
the perfect shall direct his way, *so as to bring all his designs and endeavours to a happy issue :* but the wicked shall fall by his
6 own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver
them *out of that sin and misery they might fall into :* but transgressors shall be taken in [their own] naughtiness, *and irrecov-*
7 *erably destroyed.* When a wicked man dieth, [his] expectation
shall perish ; *all his hope of pleasure and happiness in temporal things, and his expectation of escaping eternal misery :* and the
hope of unjust [men] perisheth, *while the expectation of a good*
8 *man is answered and outdone.* The righteous is delivered out of
trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead, *to that misery he*
9 *had formerly occasioned to the righteous.* An hypocrite with [his]
mouth destroyeth his neighbour, *by flattering and deceiving him ;* but through knowledge, *or prudence,* shall the just be delivered
10 *from his snares.* When it goeth well with the righteous, the
city rejoiceth : and when the wicked perish, [there is] shouting ; *men have such a regard for their own interest, and such a sense of what is decent and right, that they rejoice both in the one*

11 *and in the other.* By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; *by their prayers, counsels, and admonitions:* but it is
overthrown by the mouth of the wicked; *by their blasphemy,*
12 *perverse opposition, and evil communications.* He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour; *whatever a man thinks, it is foolish in him to speak contemptuously of his neighbour, because it is provoking him, and he may return it;* but a man of understanding holdeth his peace; *if he can say no good, he will say no*
13 *harm.* A talebearer revealeth secrets; *pries into the secrets of families, and carries stories from one to another:* but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter; *an upright man conceal-*
eth that which may be hurtful to another, though he has no express
14 *charge about it.* Where no counsel [is,] the people fall; *they are influenced by private interest, and act rashly:* but in the
15 multitude of counsellors [there is] safety. He that is surety for a stranger shall smart [for it;] *he does not know his circumstances, and therefore he is in danger:* and he that hateth sureti-
16 ship is sure; *it is most prudent to avoid it.* A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong [men] retain riches; *she is as careful of her reputation, as a strong man of his riches; or, will as effectually secure a good reputation, as a strong man his wealth.*
17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul; *while he doeth good to others, he equally does good to himself; such is the connection between man and man:* but [he that is] cruel troubleth his
own flesh; *his own envy and malice tear him to pieces. This may refer to the pleasure which arises from the exercise of benevolent affections, and the anguish and remorse which are inseparable from*
18 *cruelty.* The wicked worketh a deceitful work; *that which will deceive his expectations:* but to him that soweth righteousness [shall be] a sure reward; *though it may tarry it will not disap-*
19 *point him.* As righteousness [tendeth] to life, *in its natural consequence,* so he that pursueth evil [pursueth it] to his own death.
20 They that are of a froward heart, *persons of double dealing, who are perverse and ill natured,* [are] abomination to the LORD: but [such as are] upright in [their] way [are] his delight.
21 [Though] hand [join] in hand, *though they form a potent alliance, and strengthen and countenance one another,* the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered
22 *from their confederacies, by the help of God alone.* [As] a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, *which is more taken notice of, and more despised on that account,* [so is] a fair woman which is without discretion; *without taste, without judging what is right and*
23 *wrong, and not considering consequences.* The desire of the righteous [is] only good; *either to do or get good, and it shall be granted them:* [but] the expectation of the wicked [is] wrath; *whatsoever happiness they promise themselves, the issue will be*
24 *wrath and destruction.* There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and [there is] that withholdeth more than is meet, *not providing for their families, sparing necessary expenses in trade, and showing a covetous temper in every thing,* but [it tend-

eth] to poverty; *by a strange train of providences they are fre-*
25 *quently beggared.* The liberal soul shall be made fat, *comfortable and happy:* and he that watereth shall be watered also himself; *it shall rain upon him blessings as copiously as showers.*
26 He that withholdeth corn *in dear times, in hopes of a higher market, and will not sell it at a reasonable price, and for a moderate profit,* the people shall curse him: but blessing *from God, as well as his neighbour,* [shall be] upon the head of him that sell-
27 eth [it.] He that diligently seeketh good, *or to do good,* procureth favour *from God and man:* but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him; *he draws upon himself the evils he de-*
28 *signed against others.* He that trusteth in his riches shall fall *like a withered leaf:* but the righteous shall flourish as a branch;
29 *shall grow stronger and stronger, and be more fruitful.* He that troubleth his own house, *who ruins his family by extravagance, or makes it unhappy by ill nature,* shall inherit the wind; *he shall have nothing but air to live upon; or, he shall raise a dreadful storm which shall fall upon his own head:* and the fool [shall be]
servant unto the wise of heart; *those who are foolish, shall be brought so low, that they shall be glad to become servants to those who set out in life with less than themselves, but by prudence and*
30 *diligence have risen in the world.* The fruit of the righteous [is] a tree of life, *is the means of much good;* and he that winneth souls *to God and goodness,* [is] wise, *though his method may not be so*
31 *judicious as that of others.* Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner *shall be corrected for their sins, in this world, or in another. See how much religion consists in justice, humanity, good temper, and zeal to do good. May we not only hear these things, but apply our minds to do them.*

CHAP. XII.

1 WHOSO loveth instruction loveth knowledge; *is in the*
way to be wise and good: but he that hateth reproof
2 [is] brutish; *wants sense as well as grace.* A good [man] obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will
3 he condemn. A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved; *he shall be*
4 *established by righteousness.* A virtuous woman, *a diligent, active woman, as the word signifies, who applies close to family business,* [is] a crown to her husband, *an ornament and a blessing to him:* but she that maketh ashamed [is] as rottenness in his bones;
though he does not show it publicly, it is a continual and incurable
5 *vexation to him.* The thoughts of the righteous [are] right; *it is his constant purpose to deal justly with God and man:* [but]
6 the counsels of the wicked [are] *carried on by* deceit. The words of the wicked [are] to lie in wait for blood; *to corrupt*

men and bring them to death and ruin : but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them, *by warning and exhorting those who are assaulted by dangerous persons and principles, and by vindicating their character.* The wicked are overthrown, and [are] not *to be found :* but the house of the righteous shall stand. A man shall be commended according to his wisdom : but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised *as a crafty knave.* [He that is] despised, *or overlooked,* and hath a servant, [is] better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread ; *or rather, Better is he that lives meanly, and is servant to himself, than he that appears in a great deal of grandeur, and has not wherewith to support it. This is a common case ; many who make a great figure in the world, would not have bread to eat, if their debts were paid. It is prudent to set out in life plainly, and be servants to ourselves.* A righteous [man] regardeth the life of his beast, *that it be not used cruelly, but be moderately worked, and have proper food and rest, as a sensitive creature and a creature of God:* but the tender mercies of the wicked [are] cruel ; *they have lost the natural compassion of men, and delight in cruelty.* He that tilleth his land, *who minds his business, does his work himself, not trusting to servants,* shall be satisfied with bread : but he that followeth vain [persons is] void of understanding ; *he who loves company and rambling about, who makes frequent and long visits, and neglects his business is a fool.* The wicked desireth the net of evil [men ;] *longs to practise the arts by which other wicked men draw their neighbours and acquaintance into snares, and thereby enrich themselves :* but the root of the righteous yieldeth [fruit ;] *the righteous have enough, and are comfortable without such unjust courses.* The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips ; *cuts his throat with his own tongue, brings upon himself troubles and law suits :* but the just man shall come out of trouble, *by his prudent speeches and conduct.* A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of [his] mouth : and the recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him ; *his good words, and much more his good actions, shall be remembered and rewarded.* The way of a fool [is] right in his own eyes ; *he is confident and asks no advice :* but he that hearkeneth unto counsel, *who does not rely entirely upon his own judgment,* [is] wise. A fool's wrath is presently known ; *he fires immediately, which shows his folly :* but a prudent [man] overcometh shame ; *he curbs his passions, and his resentment of the greatest injuries.* [He that] speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness ; *he who is used to speak truth in common conversation, will do it in public as a witness ;* but a false witness deceit. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword ; *the cut throat, or common assassin, is not more pernicious than the man who makes it his business to wound his neighbour's reputation and sow discord among them :* but the tongue of the wise [is] health, *or healing, it promotes peace and love.* The lip of truth shall be established for ever : but a lying tongue [is] but for a moment ; *he loses his credit, and is not*

20 *believed when he speaks truth.* Deceit [is] in the heart of them
that imagine evil; *they deceive themselves, and bring mischief on
their own heads:* but to the counsellors of peace [is] joy; *it is
a comfortable reflection, that they have always taken the mildest side,*
21 *have endeavoured to make peace, and not promote discord.* There
shall no *real* evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be
filled with mischief, *even when filled with sensual gratifications.*
22 Lying lips [are] abomination to the LORD; *he abhors all kind
and degree of falsehood:* but they that deal truly, *as well as speak
truly,* [are] his delight; *and this circumstance of being loved or
hated of God, will turn the balance as to all present advantages.*
23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge; *does not make a pomp or
show of it, but knows when to be silent:* but the heart of fools pro-
claimeth foolishness; *while they want to show their knowledge*
24 *they only proclaim their ignorance and folly.* The hand of the
diligent shall bear rule; *shall have wealth and power:* but the
slothful shall be under tribute; *will always be in straits, and de-*
25 *pendant upon others.* Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it
stoop, *therefore those who are sorrowful and low spirited should
not pore on their sorrows, but pursue their business, and get into
friendly and cheerful company:* but a good word maketh it glad,
therefore others should be ready to comfort them. This is especially
26 *applicable to the promises of God's word.* The righteous [is]
more excellent than his neighbour *in every respect, and particu-
larly as he does not delude himself with vain hopes:* but the way
27 of the wicked seduceth them; *they do ill for themselves.* The
slothful [man] roasteth not that which he took in hunting;
*does not make the best of his circumstances, like a man who has
taken the trouble of hunting, and through mere sloth will not dress
his game, but suffers it to spoil by him:* but the substance of a
diligent man [is] precious; *he makes the best of it, and it gives*
28 *him comfort.* In the way of righteousness [is] life; and in the
pathway [thereof there is] no death; *it is a sure way to happi-
ness here, and to immortal life hereafter. We see from hence of
what importance humility, diligence, and the wise government and
use of the tongue are to our prosperity for both worlds. Let us
habitually practise the government of the thoughts, in order to ob-
tain the government of the tongue; and as a grand motive to this,
remember that 'in the way of righteousness is life, and that in the
pathway thereof there is no death.'*

CHAP. XIII.

1 A WISE son [heareth] his father's instruction: but a
scorner heareth not rebuke, *therefore there is no hope of*
2 *him, he is not likely to be wise.* A man shall eat good by the
fruit of [his] mouth: but the soul of the transgressors [shall
eat] violence *in the present life, but especially hereafter, when by*

our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be con-
3 *demned.* He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life *from*
guilt and grief: [but] he that openeth wide his lips, *a slanderer*
or a brawler, who bolts out every thing that comes uppermost,
shall have destruction; *shall lose his reputation, and bring ruin*
4 *upon himself.* The soul of the sluggard, *who will and will not,*
has no resolution, who loves gain, but hates the exertions of the dil-
igent, such an one desireth, and [hath] nothing: but the soul of
5 the diligent shall be made fat. A righteous [man] hateth lying
in himself and others: but a wicked [man] is loathsome *to God*
6 *and man,* and cometh to shame. Righteousness keepeth [him
that is] upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the
7 sinner, *though he foolishly seeks establishment by it.* There is that
maketh himself rich, yet [hath] nothing: [there is] that ma-
keth himself poor, yet [hath] great riches. *This is applicable to*
the figure persons make in the world; therefore we have need of
prudence in judging of others, and in trusting them. It is equally
applicable to spiritual things, to conceited and modest persons.
8 The ransom of a man's life [are] his riches; *these sometimes ex-*
pose men to injuries, persecutions, and false accusations, so that
they are glad to part with their riches to ransom their lives: but
the poor heareth not rebuke; *they are often free from these*
things, men do not think it worth while to sue them, because there is
9 *nothing to be got.* The light of the righteous rejoiceth, *like the*
sun, with constant, pleasant brightness, which, though clouded or
eclipsed, is not extinguished: but the lamp, *the poor, glimmering*
candle of the wicked shall be put out, *with a disagreeable stench,*
10 *however bright it may have been.* Only by pride cometh con-
tention; *this is the chief cause of quarrels in kingdoms, churches,*
and families, and of the continuance of them: but with the well ad-
vised [is] wisdom; *they act with prudence, yield, and study*
11 *peace.* Wealth [gotten] by vanity, *by cheating, lying, and ga-*
ming, shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour,
that is, by honest industry, shall increase; *it will wear well.*
12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but [when] the desire
cometh, [it is] a tree of life; *the most desirable thing in the world.*
This should teach us not to raise our expectations too high, but to
expect and prepare for disappointments; and also not to keep
13 *others in suspense, when they expect any benefit from us.* Whoso
despiseth the word, *that is, good admonition from God or man,*
who will not study it, and be ruled by it, shall be destroyed; but
he that feareth the commandment, *who reverences the precept,*
14 *and feareth the penalty,* shall be rewarded. The law of the wise
[is] a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death; *it af-*
15 *fords him comfort, and preserves him from temptation.* Good
understanding giveth favour; *wisdom and piety are most amia-*
ble and acceptable to all: but the way of transgressors [is] hard;
rough and perplexed, however pleasant and flowery at its first en-
16 *trance.* Every prudent [man] dealeth with knowledge, *he un-*
dertakes nothing but what he understands, and proceeds cautiously,

is careful what he says, and whom he trusts: but a fool layeth
17 open [his] folly, *by his imprudence and rashness.* A wicked messenger, *who is false to his trust, or trifles on his errands,* falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador [is] health; *is com-*
18 *fortable to himself and those who employ him.* Poverty and shame [shall be to] him that refuseth instruction: but he that regard-
19 eth reproof shall be honoured *and esteemed.* The desire accomplished, *especially the pious desire,* is sweet to the soul: but [it is] abomination to fools to depart from evil; *and so the prospect of future happiness cannot persuade them to quit the bad courses*
20 *they are wedded to.* He that walketh with wise [men,] *intimately converses and forms friendships with them,* shall be wise; *conversation with such edifies and assimilates:* but a companion of fools
21 shall be destroyed. Evil pursueth sinners, *and will certainly overtake them, though they think it at a distance:* but to the righteous good shall be repayed, *for the good they have done, and the ill*
22 *they have suffered.* A good [man] leaveth an inheritance to his children's children, *by prudence, diligence, justice, and charity:* and the wealth of the sinner [is] laid up for the just; *it is frequently by the providence of God transferred to pious families, who will make*
23 *a good use of it.* Much food [is in] the tillage of the poor, *that is, in a little improved by industry: if a man has but little he should be so much the more diligent and frugal:* but there is [that is] destroyed for want of judgment; *large estates are often lost by idleness and extravagance, by over living, by keeping great tables and many servants: in other instances by out trading their capital, being bound for others, and the like; all which show a want of*
24 *judgment.* He that spareth his rod, *if no other method will do,* hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes, *before ill habits are contracted. Parents who do not keep their*
25 *children under strict discipline, are really cruel to them.* The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul; *a little serves him, he does not desire dainties and elegancies:* but the belly of the wicked shall want; *some of them ruin themselves by debauchery, others pine away through covetousness; worldly men are never satisfied. On the whole, we see that godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.*

CHAP. XIV.

1 EVERY wise woman buildeth her house; *by prudence and good management, she promotes the order, prosperity, and credit of the family, which is a mark of true wisdom:* but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands; *by her pride, prodigality, and idleness, she contributes to the ruin of it, agreeable to our*
2 *proverb, 'a man must ask his wife's leave to grow rich.'* He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD, *proves that he does*

so: but [he that is] perverse in his ways, *unjust, intemperate, and irregular,* despiseth him, *whatever pretensions he makes*
3 *to devotion.* In the mouth of the foolish [is] a rod of pride; *they often bring upon themselves deserved correction:* but the lips of the wise shall preserve them; *their prudent, peaceable, and pleasing words, conciliate the friendship of others, and preserve*
4 *them from danger. It is true,* Where no oxen [are,] the crib [is] clean: but much increase [is] by the strength of the ox; *and one must be set over against the other. Persons should not be averse to the fatigues and the meanest labours that a life of business exposes men to. There is a good equivalent in the increase of their substance. Guard therefore against that excessive delicacy, which makes men neglect their proper duty because of some*
5 *inconveniences.* A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies; *when we know a man's general character, we*
6 *may know how far to credit what he says.* A scorner, *one that is critical, and cavils at instructions,* seeketh wisdom, and [findeth it] not: but knowledge [is] easy unto him that understandeth;
7 *to a well disposed, humble, and teachable mind.* Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not [in him] the lips of knowledge; *if he has no relish for pious and useful*
8 *discourse, leave him, and seek better company.* The wisdom of the prudent, *the best and most useful wisdom,* [is] to understand his way; *what course he must take to be truly happy:* but the folly of fools [is] deceit; *to play the knave is the greatest folly.*
9 Fools make a mock at sin; *it is one of the surest marks of wickedness, to make light of sin, or speak of it in a trifling manner:* but among the righteous [there is] favour, *charity and compassion to the souls of others, and they are favoured of God and man.*
10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness: and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy; *we are not to judge of persons entirely by external circumstances, without examining their tempers and passions. Others little know either the sorrow of a penitent, or*
11 *the joy of a believer: we are not to judge rashly.* The *finest, firmest* house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle, *or little tent,* of the upright shall flourish: *who would not*
12 *then choose it, as a much more desirable habitation!* There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, *he may think his opinion and practice right and good,* but the end thereof [are] the ways of death. *Let us therefore be cautious, since ignorance will not always*
13 *excuse a man for ill behaviour.* Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; *there is oftentimes inward pain under the appearance of cheerfulness;* and the end of that mirth [is] heaviness; *this*
14 *is true of all vain and sensual mirth.* The backslider in heart, *who declines his duty from the fear of danger,* shall be filled with his own ways, *he shall have trouble and sorrow enough, yea, everlasting terror and torment:* and a good man [shall be satisfied] from himself; *shall have present satisfaction and an abundant*
15 *reward.* The simple believeth every word; *credits every common report, and trusts every man's promises:* but the prudent

[man] looketh well to his going ; *considers and observes it, to see that he has good ground for what he does. Policy without piety has too much of cunning to be good ; piety without policy is too simple to be safe. The great secret is to maintain an easy air with those with whom we converse ; but resolutely to maintain such a*
16 *reserve as shall not put us into the power of any.* A wise [man] feareth, and departeth from evil ; *keeps out of harm's way and avoids the appearance of evil :* but the fool rageth, and is confident ; *runs rashly on, and, confident he shall do right, despises and*
17 *resents the kindest and mildest cautions.* [He that is] soon angry, *of a hasty, passionate spirit,* dealeth foolishly : and a man of wicked devices is hated ; *a deliberate villain is universally detested.*
18 The simple, *giddy, extravagant people,* inherit folly, *and will quickly have nothing else to inherit :* but the prudent are crowned with knowledge ; *it is both their ornament and support.*
19 The evil bow before the good ; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous ; *therefore they should not despise and in-*
20 *sult them in their prosperity.* The poor is hated even of his own neighbour : but the rich [hath] many friends, *who hope to get something by them. This is a motive to frugality and diligence.*
21 He that despiseth his neighbour, *because he is low or mean, and will not relieve him,* sinneth ; *a remarkable phrase, intimating, that if we considered the dignity of the rational nature, we should do our utmost to relieve others :* but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy [is] he, *both in the benevolence of his temper, (which*
22 *affords the greatest pleasure) and in the approbation of God.* Do they not err that devise evil ? but mercy and truth [shall be] to them that devise good ; *divine mercy shall be their security,*
23 *their portion, and their joy.* In all labour there is profit : but the talk of the lips [tendeth] only to penury : *a man had better employ himself in the meanest labours, than go talking about, wasting his own time and that of others in impertinence and folly. Some men of natural good sense and wit thus prove fools in con-*
24 *duct, and by these means bring their families to poverty.* The crown of the wise [is] their riches ; *as they have great honour, and advantages for doing good :* [but] the foolishness of fools [is] folly ; *when riches fall into the hands of a fool, he only dis-*
25 *plays his folly the more ; so that wisdom is better than riches.* A true witness delivereth souls, *lives and reputations :* but a deceitful [witness] speaketh lies *in judicial causes, and therefore does*
26 *great mischief.* In the fear of the LORD [is] strong confidence, *in the greatest danger :* and his children, *the children of those who fear God,* shall have a place of refuge. *How great an encouragement is it to real piety, that it entails a blessing upon our families ! and how comfortable a thing to be the children of good*
27 *men !* The fear of the LORD [is] a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death ; *it gives continual refreshment, and*
28 *secures from the greatest dangers.* In the multitude of people [is] the king's honour : but in the want of people [is] the destruction of the prince : *this should teach princes not to consume*

them by war, or drive them out by persecution and oppression.
29 [He that is] slow to wrath [is] of great understanding: but
[he that is] hasty of spirit exalteth folly; *lifts it up as a stand-*
30 *ard, and teaches every body to despise him.* A sound heart, *a*
quiet, gentle, contented mind, [is] the life of the flesh: but
envy the rottenness of the bones; *it is its own punishment, wast-*
31 *ing the spirits and consuming the strength.* He that oppresseth
the poor reproacheth his Maker *for making him poor; he con-*
temns God's promises, and forgets his commands: but he that
32 honoureth him hath mercy on the poor. The wicked is driven
away in his wickedness; *in the midst of it, sometimes in the very*
act; he is driven away against his will in agony and confusion:
but the righteous hath hope in his death; *hope of a better state*
33 *beyond this.* Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath un-
derstanding; *he knows when to conceal it:* but [that which is]
in the midst of fools is made known; *there is no concealing of a*
34 *fool, the abundance of his loquacity shows his emptiness.* Right-
eousness exalteth a nation, *by its natural consequences securing*
35 *the divine blessing:* but sin [is] a reproach to any people. The
king's favour [is] toward a wise servant: but his wrath is
[against] him that causeth shame; *he shall be disgraced and*
banished the court. We may observe from hence, that Solomon ev-
ery where estimates the understanding by prudence and meekness,
caution and circumspection, not by learning or wit. May we be
ambitious to act upon these maxims, as they are necessary to our
happiness in both worlds.

CHAP. XV.

1 A SOFT, *a mild and submissive* answer turneth away wrath:
but grievous words stir up anger; *raise passion where*
2 *there was none, and heighten it where there was.* The tongue
of the wise useth knowledge aright; *sets it off by a proper man-*
ner of introducing it: but the mouth of fools poureth out fool-
ishness, *some silly stuff, or some good thoughts in a confused, osten-*
3 *tatious manner.* The eyes of the LORD [are] in every place,
4 beholding the evil and the good. A wholesome tongue [is] a
tree of life; *the tongue which speaks comfort and heals breaches,*
is the greatest blessing to those it converses with: but perverse-
ness therein [is] a breach in the spirit; *lying, calumny, and ill*
natured language, tend to grieve and break the heart; the one
cheers a broken spirit, the other makes a breach in one that is sound.
5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth
6 reproof is prudent; *is in the way to improve in knowledge.* In
the house of the righteous [is] much treasure, *though but little*
wealth, because he has content and joy: but in the *large* revenues
of the wicked is trouble; *he has no comfort in them, his bad pas-*
7 *sions spoil all.* The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, *scatter*

it wide, like seed: but the heart of the foolish [doeth] not so;
8 *he has neither ability nor inclination to do good.* The *most costly* sacrifice of the wicked [is] an abomination to the LORD: but the
9 prayer of the upright [is] his delight: *and the reason is,* The way of the wicked [is] an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness; *who is sincere in the pursuit of righteousness, who hungers and thirsts after it.*
10 Correction [is] grievous unto him that forsaketh the way *of religion:* [and] he that hateth reproof shall die. *We here see why many hate reproof; but, to die for want of attending to it, is infi-*
11 *nitely worse than any present mortification.* Hell and destruction, *the grave and the invisible world,* [are] before the LORD: how
12 much more then the hearts of the children of men? A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the
13 wise, *because he is determined to go on in an evil way.* A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken, *and rendered unfit for the service of God and man. This teaches us to cultivate an innocent cheerful-*
14 *ness, and not suffer sorrow to prey upon the mind.* The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness; *foolish men pour out a torrent of impertinent, idle discourse, while a wise man seeks improvement in*
15 *wisdom and grace, and finds the comfort of it.* All the days of the afflicted [are] evil: but he that is of a merry heart [hath] a continual feast; *if a poor afflicted man be of a cheerful temper, it makes up the want of other enjoyments, and sweetens his evil days,*
16 Better [is] a little with the fear of the LORD, *with a good conscience, and serving God with it,* than great treasure and trouble therewith; *than an uneasy mind and the abuse of wealth, which aggravates their future account. This is an important hint to parents to pursue religion rather than wealth, and be more careful*
17 *that their children be religious than rich.* Better [is] a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith; *the meanest provision with family peace and love, is better than the*
18 *greatest dainty and hatred therewith.* A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but [he that is] slow to anger appeaseth strife; *a peaceable, quiet spirit is its own reward, and of great service to*
19 *the world.* The way of the slothful [man is] as an hedge of thorns; *he makes difficulties where there are none, and magnifies those that are:* but the way of the righteous [is] made plain, *easy and pleasant, notwithstanding all discouragements; he does*
20 *not sink under but surmounts difficulties.* A wise son maketh a glad father, *as he hopes he will prove an honour to the family;* but a foolish man despiseth his mother; *plainly shows he has no regard to her, who perhaps has spoiled him by her indulgence.*
21 Folly [is] joy to [him that is] destitute of wisdom; *he sins with delight, and boasts of it:* but a man of understanding walketh
uprightly; *this affords him the highest satisfaction, and will be*
22 *greatly rewarded.* Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established, *accom-*

plished and brought to a good issue. A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word [spoken] in due season, how good [is it,] *both to himself and others!* The way of life [is] above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath, *though an up hill road and difficult, yet this balances all, that it preserves a man from hell (as some understand it;) or rather, the way of life, or true religion, leads a man's thoughts upwards, to an holy and heavenly conversation.* The LORD will destroy the house of the proud, *who trample on the poor:* but he will establish the border of the widow, *who is afflicted and oppressed.* The thoughts of the wicked [are] an abomination to the LORD, *who sees and hates them:* but [the words] of the pure [are] pleasant words, *that is, pleasing to God. Let us therefore guard our thoughts and maintain good and useful discourse.* He that is greedy of gain, *or eager in the pursuit of it,* troubleth his own house; *throws them into a continual hurry, will not allow them proper sleep or relaxation, is a burden to children and servants, and brings the curse of God upon them:* but he that hateth gifts shall live; *he who hateth bribery, dishonesty, and all mean tricks, shall live in reputation and comfort.* The heart of the righteous studieth to answer; *he thinks before he speaks, and studies what may be useful:* but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things, *without any consideration of the consequences.* The LORD [is] far from the wicked; *and thus what was his crime is his punishment: there will be a time when every man will desire that God may be near him:* but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart, *gives pleasure and vigour to the body:* [and] a good report maketh the bones fat. *This should teach us to be thankful if God continues the light of our eyes, and the brightness of our reputation.* The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise; *he is admitted into their company as a teachable person, though he cannot bear a part in the conversation.* He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul; *is not sufficiently sensible of his rational, immortal nature, and prefers the body to it:* but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding, *and so preserveth his soul.* The fear of the LORD [is] the instruction of wisdom; *the most important precept of wisdom;* and before honour [is] humility. *Learn this, that the true, the sure, and the readiest way to be wise and honourable, is to be devout and humble.*

CHAP. XVI.

THE preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue [is] from the LORD; *it depends on him whether they shall speak with such elocution or success as they intended.*

All the ways of a man [are] clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits; *God has as perfect a knowledge of men's*

designs as they have of those things which they weigh in the
3 *balance with the greatest exactness.* Commit thy works unto
the LORD, *ask his direction, and seek a blessing from him,* and
thy thoughts shall be established, *without distressing cares or*
4 *fears.* The LORD hath made all [things] for himself; yea,
even the wicked for the day of evil; *he has made all things to*
answer the purposes of his providence and glory, and even wicked
men to be executioners of his vengeance; or rather, the Lord hath
made all things suited to each other, and proportioned the punish-
ment of the wicked to their crimes; he hath established the connec-
5 *tion between vice and misery in the future world.* Every one
without exception, [that is] proud in heart, [is] an abomination to
the LORD, *though he may admire and applaud himself:* [though]
6 hand [join] in hand, he shall not be unpunished. By mercy and
truth iniquity is purged; *fidelity and charity are the ready way*
to avert the wrath of God: and by the fear of the LORD [men]
depart from evil; *where true religion is there will be reformation.*
7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his ene-
mies to be at peace with him; *he can calm their spirits and dis-*
8 *arm their resentment.* Better [is] a little with righteousness
than great revenues without right; *it is more lasting and more*
9 *satisfying.* A man's heart deviseth his way: but *after all* the
LORD directeth his steps, *therefore there is reason for prayer and*
10 *thankfulness.* A divine sentence [is,] *or should be,* in the lips of
the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment, *in giving*
orders and executing judgment; or, if the dictates of God's word
be in his lips, a religious regard to the scripture will have a good
11 *influence on his administration.* A just weight and balance [are]
the LORD's: all the weights of the bag [are] his work, *are ap-*
pointed and commanded by him; justice ought to be observed in the
least instances, and a regard to God will be an engagement to uni-
12 *versal integrity.* [It is,] *that is, it should be,* an abomination to
kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by
righteousness; *it tends to engage the affections of the people and*
13 *the favour of God, and is the surest defence of a prince.* Right-
eous lips [are] the delight of kings; and they love him that
speaketh right; *an intimation to Solomon's subjects what behav-*
14 *iour would please him.* The wrath of a king [is as] messengers
of death, *especially in such arbitrary monarchies as those in the*
east; how much more dreadful is the wrath of God; but a wise
man will pacify it; *he will take the most wise and prudent time*
15 *and methods in doing it.* In the light of the king's countenance
[is] life; *there is a transport attending the smile of a prince;* and
his favour [is] as a cloud of the latter rain; *how valuable then is*
16 *God's favour!* How much better *in every respect* [is it] to get
wisdom than gold? and to get understanding rather to be
chosen than silver? *How foolish then is their conduct who spend*
all their days in getting wealth, without improving their own or
17 *their children's minds.* The highway, *that is, the straight and*
easy path, of the upright is to depart from evil; *this is his con-*

stant aim and endeavour : he that keepeth his way, *looks well to*
his actions, preserveth his soul *from sorrow and destruction.*
18 Pride [goeth] before destruction, *in this world and in the next,*
and an haughty spirit before a fall ; *to be proud of any thing is*
19 *the way to lose it.* Better [it is to be] of an humble spirit with
the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud ; *an humble*
man is happier in afflictions, than an haughty, insolent man in the
midst of prosperity and triumph. Here Solomon not only opposes
the blessings of virtue to the rewards of vice, (that would be do-
ing vice too much honour ;) but he opposes the naked virtue, and
that the least magnificent of all others, to the advantages of the
most exalted vice ; the spirit of meekness to the spoils of pride.
20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good, *respect and suc-*
cess : and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy [is] he ; *true re-*
21 *ligion only can make a man happy.* The wise in heart shall be
called prudent, *that is, have the honour of their wisdom :* and the
sweetness of the lips increaseth learning ; *eloquence adds a new*
value to it ; makes it more agreeable, diffusive, and instructive.
22 Understanding [is] a wellspring of life unto him that hath it ; *it*
streams forth for the instruction of others : but the instruction of
fools [is] folly ; *they only betray their own folly, and no good is to*
23 *be got by them.* The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and
addeth learning to his lips ; *he speaks from experience, which*
24 *makes what he says the more regarded.* Pleasant words, *such*
words of wisdom as before described, [are as] an honeycomb,
sweet to the soul, and health to the bones, *are not only pleas-*
ant, but wholesome ; like honey, they have an agreeable taste,
25 *and a medicinal virtue.* There is a way that seemeth right unto
a man : but the end thereof [are] the ways of death ; *this is*
26 *repeated to teach us not to deceive ourselves.* He that laboureth,
laboureth for himself ; for his mouth craveth it of him ; *honest*
industry is necessary for the preservation of life, but more neces-
27 *sary in the concerns of the soul.* An ungodly man diggeth up
evil ; *is always contriving to do mischief ; with great labour and*
industry diving into what is secret by surmises and suspicions :
and in his lips [there is] as a burning fire ; *his lying, slanderous*
28 *speeches are very mischievous.* A froward man soweth strife
where there is love and peace ; and a whisperer separateth chief
29 friends, *by carrying tales and misrepresentations.* A violent man
enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way [that is]
not good ; *contrives to do him the greatest injury. Let us aim at*
a contrary character, and attempt to draw our friends into the
30 *ways of religion.* He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things ;
he does it with deliberation and contrivance : moving his lips he
bringeth evil to pass ; *giving signs to his associates, that they*
31 *may execute their wicked projects.* The hoary head [is] a crown
of glory, [if] it be found in the way of righteousness ; *it is an hon-*
ourable thing to be an aged saint : such should be reverenced, and
young people should be engaged to be good betimes, that they may
32 *have this honour if they should live to be old.* [He that is] slow to

anger, *not easily put into a passion, nor resents a provocation,* [is] better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city; *some of the most glorious conquerors amidst the greatest success and triumph, have been, through the violence of their own passions, the objects of pity to all who read their his-*
33 *tory; as Alexander, and others.* The lot is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof [is] of the LORD; *his providence determines the most casual events, therefore we should be reconciled to our condition, and patient and contented in every state.*

CHAP. XVII.

1 BETTER [is] a dry morsel, *a dry crust,* and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices [with] strife; *than the greatest feast upon the remains of the most costly sacrifices: all families, especially the poor, should cultivate peace, and thus secure the*
2 *most valuable enjoyment of life.* A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame: and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren; *a wise servant often gets money sufficient to*
3 *buy the estate which foolish children are obliged to sell.* The fining pot [is] for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts; *afflictions discover the dross, and prove what is good.*
4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; *it is a sign of a wicked disposition to give credit to every malicious story raised and spread:* [and] a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue; *liars love*
5 *to strengthen and justify one another.* Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker *who made him so, who has taken the poor under his protection, and will punish the reproachers:* [and] he
6 that is glad at calamities shall not go unpunished. Children's children [are] the crown of old men; *it is an honour to live to be old and see many descendants:* and the glory of children [are] their fathers; *it is an honour for children to be descended from*
7 *worthy parents.* Excellent speech becometh not a fool; *his*
8 *manners contradict it:* much less do lying lips a prince. A gift [is as] a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it, *scattering its rays from every side, is sparkling and beautiful:* whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth. *This intimates the unhappy influence which interest has to make men act against reason, con-*
9 *science, and the public good.* He that covereth a transgression, *maketh the best of every thing,* seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter, *and probably aggravates it,* separateth [very] friends; *such talebearers as these are very pernicious persons, and should be checked by those who are friends to peace and love.*
10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man, *maketh a greater im-*
11 *pression upon him,* than an hundred stripes into a fool. An evil [man] seeketh only rebellion, *or mischief:* therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. *This is a warning not to*

entertain seditious councils and designs, lest the prince should send
12 *an executioner, as was customary in the east.* Let a bear robbed
of her whelps, *the most mischievous animal in enraged circum-*
stances, meet a man rather than a fool in his folly; *rather than a*
13 *man under the influence of strong and vicious passions.* Whoso
rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house;
14 *it may be punished in the next generation.* The beginning of
strife [is as] when one letteth out water: therefore leave off con-
tention, before it be meddled with; *a beautiful allusion to a well*
known fact, when a breach is once made in a dam no one can tell where
it will stop, it will grow wider and larger, therefore let us not med-
15 *dle with it at all.* He that justifieth the wicked, *treating him*
as, and pronouncing him to be righteous, and he that condemneth
the just, *censures and condemns those who are sincere and upright*
for some little indiscretions, even they both [are] abomination to
16 the LORD. Wherefore [is there] a price in the hand of a fool,
an opportunity and advantage to get wisdom, seeing [he hath]
17 no heart, *neither skill, resolution, nor desire* [to it?] A friend
loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity; *they only*
18 *are true friends who stick to us and help us in adversity.* A man
void of understanding striketh hands, [and] becometh surety in
19 the presence of his friend, *who is able to answer for himself.* He
loveth transgression that loveth strife, *that is, brawling, conten-*
tions, law suits, and disputes in religion: [and] he that exalteth
his gate seeketh destruction; *he who affects grandeur and mag-*
nificence, his substance and his estate all run out at his pompous
gate, and make way for destruction to enter in: this is the ruin of
20 *multitudes of young people.* He that hath a froward heart, *a per-*
verse, fretful disposition, findeth no good: and he that hath a
perverse tongue, *a deceitful, ill natured tongue,* falleth into mis-
21 chief, *brings it upon himself by his own perverseness.* He that
begetteth a fool, *a wicked son,* [doeth it] to his sorrow: and the
father of a fool hath no joy *in any thing else. Such parents are*
greatly to be pitied; and in order to prevent this, they cannot be
22 *too careful in the education of their children.* A merry heart,
that is, a cheerful temper, doeth good [like] a medicine: but a
broken spirit drieth the bones; *weakens the strength, and con-*
23 *sumes the vital parts.* A wicked [man] taketh, *or accepteth,* a
gift out of the bosom *of the giver, he does it secretly,* to pervert
24 the ways of judgment. Wisdom [is] before him that hath un-
derstanding; *he has his thoughts about him, looks before him, and*
considers the consequences of things: but the eyes of a fool [are]
in the ends of the earth; *he hath a roving, dissipated spirit, med-*
dling with things that he hath no concern in, and that are of no im-
25 *portance.* A foolish son [is] a grief to his father, and bitterness
to her that bare him: *this is a maxim that Solomon often repeats;*
probably he had his own son Rehoboam in his eye. It is of great im-
26 *portance for parents and children to attend to it.* Also to punish
the just [is] not good, [nor] to strike princes for equity; *it is a*
crime in a magistrate to punish the just, but for a king to punish,

his nobles for equity is most horrible, because it is discouraging them from doing good when in their power, and weakening his own
27 *hands.* He that hath knowledge spareth his words, *is not fond of talking, speaks only when it is fit and may be useful:* [and] a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit, *or rather, a cool spirit, as in the margin of our bibles, for to be calm, dispassionate, and not easily provoked, is a mark of wisdom and an excellent spirit.*
28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: [and] he that shutteth his lips [is esteemed] a man of understanding; *the concealment of folly is wisdom, and sometimes wisdom uttered is folly; men's abilities are chiefly discovered by their discourse, and talkative persons proclaim their own folly. Let every man therefore be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.*

CHAP. XVIII.

1 THROUGH desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh [and] intermeddleth with all wisdom; *or rather, a man of retirement seeketh after his desire, and intermeddleth with*
2 *all wisdom. Retirement is of great use to improve the mind.* A fool hath no delight in understanding, *in its real use, only for ostentation or amusement,* but that his heart may discover itself;
3 *all his delight is to vent his own folly and wickedness.* When the wicked cometh, [then] cometh also contempt *upon God and religion, and every thing valuable;* and with ignominy reproach, *reproachful language concerning others: if a man speaks reproachfully and contemptibly of others, mark him for a wicked man.*
4 The words of a *wise* man's mouth [are as] deep waters, [and] the well spring of wisdom [as] a flowing brook; *it is an inex-*
5 *haustible spring of entertainment and improvement.* [It is] not good to accept, *to favour or justify,* the person of the wicked, *in*
6 *order* to overthrow the righteous in judgment. A fool's lips enter into contention, *he uses passionate and provoking language,* and his mouth calleth for strokes; *he brings sorrow and punish-*
7 *ment upon himself.* A fool's mouth [is] his destruction, and his lips [are] the snare of his soul; *it will especially appear to be so at the judgment day, when by our words we shall be justified, and*
8 *by our words we shall be condemned.* The words of a talebearer, *who picks up stories, pries into secrets, and carries them from house to house, who relates falsehoods, who misrepresents things, or whispers about things which should not be spoken of, though true, the words of such* [are] as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly; *the wounds are mortal though silent, and destroy the reputation and interest of the persons*
9 *spoken of, and the love of those spoken to.* He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great wast-
10 er; *they are both criminal, and both come to poverty.* The name of the LORD, *his power, goodness, and promises,* [is] a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe;

there he seeks for protection by faith and prayer, and there he finds
11 *it, together with a rich supply of all his wants.* The rich man's
wealth [is] his strong city, and as an high wall in his own con-
ceit ; *he thinks himself securely intrenched, so that no danger can*
come near him, forgetting his dependence upon God ; but it is only
in his own conceit, and he finds his high walls thrown down by a
12 *variety of accidents.* Before destruction the heart of man is
haughty, and before honour [is] humility ; *when a man finds*
himself disposed to be proud of any of his endowments and posses-
sions, he has need to be alarmed, as it is an intimation that he is in
13 *danger of being deprived of them.* He that answereth a matter
before he heareth [it,] *who thinks to show his quickness of appre-*
hension, and pronounces dogmatically without hearing both sides,
14 it [is] folly and shame unto him. The spirit of a man will sus-
tain his infirmity, *bear up under dangers and troubles ;* but a
wounded spirit who can bear ? *What hath a man to comfort and*
uphold him, if he has not the reason of his own mind, the testimony
of his conscience, and a sense of God's favour ? Great care there-
fore should be taken to govern the passions, and keep the spirits
15 *calm, in order to prevent such a dreadful crisis.* The heart of the
prudent getteth knowledge ; and the ear of the wise seeketh
knowledge ; *a diligent application to the means of improving in*
knowledge, both by study and conversation, is a sign of true wis-
16 *dom.* A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him be-
fore great men. *This ancient custom of bringing presents when*
17 *they wait upon their superiors, is still retained in the east.* [He
that is] first in his own cause [seemeth] just ; but his neigh-
bour cometh and searcheth him ; *one story is good till another is*
told, therefore we should not be rash and hasty in our determina-
18 *tions, but hear both sides.* The lot causeth contentions to cease,
and parteth between the mighty. *Solomon here advises to refer*
troublesome matters to lot, and to sit down contented with the event ;
19 *this may be very useful still, if not superstitiously performed.* A
brother offended [is harder to be won] than a strong city : and
[their] contentions [are] like the bars of a castle : *the nearness of*
the relation heightens the provocation, therefore we should be careful
20 *not to offend or despise our near relations or friends.* A man's belly
shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth ; [and] with the
increase of his lips shall he be filled ; *he shall have pleasure or un-*
21 *easiness, as he speaks well or ill.* Death and life [are] in the
power of the tongue ; *a great deal of good or evil is done by it,*
and they that love it, *that love life, and give conversation a wise*
22 *turn,* shall eat the fruit thereof. [Whoso] findeth a wife, *or (as*
some ancient versions render it) a good wife, findeth a good
[thing,] and obtaineth favour of the LORD, *and he ought to ac-*
knowledge the goodness of God in giving him a suitable companion.
23 The poor useth entreaties, *are forced to make submissions and*
use entreaties, even for what is their due ; but the rich answereth
roughly ; *riches are a temptation to haughtiness and arrogance,*
24 *which very much lessen the value of them.* A man [that hath]

friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend [that] sticketh closer than a brother; *friends are worth keeping, and may in many circumstances be more useful to us than near relations; therefore they must be used well, we must love and serve them, and behave friendly to them, if we desire they should behave so to us.*

CHAP. XIX.

1 BETTER [is] the poor that walketh in his integrity, than
[he that is] perverse in his lips, and is a fool; *an honest poor man is more honourable, easy, and secure, than a sly wicked*
2 *man, though he may get rich by his artifices.* Also, [that] the soul [be] without knowledge, [it is] not good; *the want of understanding and deliberation proves an occasion of great mischief:* and he that hasteth with [his] feet sinneth; *if a man of good sense runs rashly and inconsiderately on, it will be as fatal to him*
3 *as the want of understanding.* The foolishness of man perverteth his way, *brings him into troubles and straits:* and his heart fretteth against the LORD; *he lays the blame upon Providence.*
4 Wealth maketh many friends, *if not to his person, yet to his circumstances;* but the poor is separated from his neighbour; *is*
5 *neglected by those who should help him.* A false witness shall not be unpunished, and [he that] speaketh lies shall not escape; *he who speaketh lies privately, though not confirmed by an oath,*
6 *shall not escape the divine judgment.* Many will entreat the favour of the prince, *because great things are in his power:* and every man [is] a friend to him that giveth gifts; *to a man whose circumstances enable him and whose temper inclines him to be liberal. What a strong argument is this to seek the divine friendship!*
7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him *as a disgrace and burden to them:* how much more do his friends go far from him, *that is, those who professed themselves such?* he pursueth [them with] words, *he entreats them and puts them in mind of former*
8 *promises,* [yet] they [are] wanting [to him.] He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding,
9 *who conducts his life by prudent counsel,* shall find good. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and [he that] speaketh lies shall perish; *this is repeated because it is an important maxim, see v. 5.*
10 Delight is not seemly for a fool; *he knows not how to behave in prosperity; he useth the delights of life to dishonour God, and for his own mischief;* much less for a servant to have rule over princes; *if such an one be in power, he is intolerable, and a judgment*
11 *on mankind.* The discretion of a man deferreth his anger *till he is cool, and has considered the matter:* and [it is] his glory to pass over a transgression, *not to revenge it; though the perverse*
12 *judgment of the world is contrary.* The king's wrath [is] as the roaring of a lion; but his favour [is] as dew upon the grass.

13 *This is designed to promote loyalty.* A foolish son [is] the calam-
ity of his father: and the contentions of a wife [are] a continual
dropping; *make the house uncomfortable and unfit to be inhab-
ited, and so tempt a man to extravagance abroad. A wicked son
and a scolding wife, are two of the saddest plagues in a family.*
14 House and riches [are] the inheritance of fathers: and a pru-
dent wife [is] from the LORD, *she does not come by hereditary
right; his providence therefore should be acknowledged in this*
15 *favour.* Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; *it has a stupify-
ing faculty, and makes men unfit for business;* and an idle soul
16 shall suffer hunger; *shall be reduced to poverty and want.* He
that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; *secures
his peace and happiness;* [but] he that despiseth his ways shall
die; *he that never thinks or minds how he acts, who follows his
own inclination and the fashion, goes the direct way to destruction.*
17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and
that which he hath given will he pay him again; *it is in a
safe hand, and he shall have good interest. A delightful thought,
and of more force than a thousand volumes to recommend liber-*
18 *ality.* Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul
spare for his crying; *it should be rather rendered, 'Do not lift
up thy soul to his destruction, that is, correct him, but not immod-*
19 *erately.'* A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment; *he
will have a deal of perplexity and uneasiness, quarrels, and law
suits:* for if thou deliver [him,] yet thou must do it again; *he
will soon bring himself into some other scrape by his passion and per-*
20 *verseness.* Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou
mayest be wise in the latter end; *consider the final consequences*
21 *of things; such wisdom will be wisdom indeed.* [There are]
many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the
LORD, that shall stand *in spite of them all. A comfortable thought*
22 *to a good man at all times.* The desire of a man [is] his kind-
ness; *it is agreeable when persons mean well, though it is not in
their power to do much:* and a poor man [is] better than a liar;
*a poor man who gives good evidence of a kind, benevolent dispo-
sition, is more esteemed and respected than a liar, that is, than a
rich man who makes great professions and promises, and does not
answer them, has nothing at the service of his friends but compli-*
23 *ments.* The fear of the LORD [tendeth] to life: and [he that
hath it] shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil,
24 *with any destructive evil.* A slothful [man] hideth his hand in
[his] bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth
again; *when sloth prevails it makes a man unwilling to do the most*
25 *necessary things.* Smite a scorner, *a profligate sinner,* and the
simple will beware; *if it does him no good, it may be a warning
to others:* and reprove one that hath understanding, [and] he
will understand knowledge; *a wise man will be better for reproof.*
26 He that wasteth [his] father, [and] chaseth away [his] mother,
[is] a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach *to his parents
and himself; but we very seldom see such things in children who*

27 *have been wisely and religiously educated.* Cease, my son, to
hear the instruction [that causeth] to err from the words of
knowledge; *do not hearken to any who would prejudice you*
28 *against religion or weaken your regard to it.* An ungodly wit-
ness scorneth judgment, *that is, reason, equity, scripture, and the*
judgment of God against perfidious persons: and the mouth of
the wicked devoureth iniquity; *he swallows down greedily*
the greatest crimes, and is glad of any opportunity of committing
29 *them.* Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for
the back of fools; *they are sometimes punished in this world, but*
shall certainly be so in another. This should engage us to seek wis-
dom, that we may avoid these judgments, and obtain security, peace,
and everlasting happiness.

CHAP. XX.

1 WINE [is] a mocker, strong drink [is] raging: and
whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise; *it makes a*
man abusive and quarrelsome, leads him to say and do foolish
things. Let him have ever so much sense, he reduceth himself to a
level with an idiot; yea, with a brute. It is strange that drunk-
2 *enness should be the fault of so many sensible people, whom one*
would think pride should keep from it, if they had no religion. The
fear of a king, *an arbitrary monarch,* [is] as the roaring of a lion:
[whoso] provoketh him to anger sinneth [against] his own soul,
3 *exposes his life to manifest danger.* [It is] an honour for a man
to cease from strife, *cautiously to avoid it, and be the first to give*
it over: but every fool will be meddling *where he has no busi-*
4 *ness, and so stir up strife.* The sluggard will not plough by rea-
son of the cold; *the most inconsiderable difficulties affright him*
from labour: [therefore] shall he beg in harvest, and [have]
5 nothing *when others have plenty.* Counsel in the heart of man
[is like] deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it
out *by prudent discourse and diligent observation, as human indus-*
6 *try finds methods to fetch water out of the earth.* Most men will
proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who
can find? *the generality pretend to great generosity, but it is dif-*
7 *ficult to find common honesty.* The just [man] walketh in his
integrity: his children [are] blessed after him; *he entails a*
blessing on his posterity; it is happy to be the children of such a
8 *parent.* A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scatter-
eth away all evil with his eyes; *a man of integrity will have a*
natural authority in any superior relation. If a king, he will ex-
ert himself as he ought; iniquity will fly before him, and scarce
9 *bear his look, for it is a cowardly thing.* Who can say, I have
made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? *I am free from*
guilt in heart and life? Therefore let us be humble before God,
10 *and not expect perfection in others.* Divers weights, [and] divers

measures, both of them [are] alike abomination to the LORD ; *they are very detestable to him, though men may think it a small matter to use them : it is in vain to pretend to devotion, where there*
11 *is not common honesty.* Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work [be] pure, and whether [it be] right ; *you may easily guess whether he will prove modest and honest, or lewd and knavish ; therefore parents should restrain every thing that*
12 *looks bad in children, and encourage every thing promising.* The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them ; *this is true also of the faculties of the mind ; therefore we should not be proud of them, but use them for God's glory.*
13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, *rise early to thy business,* [and] thou shalt be satisfied with bread.
14 [It is] naught, [it is] naught, saith the buyer : but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth. *Thus men impose upon one another, and act contrary to the golden rule of doing as they would*
15 *be done by.* There is gold and a multitude of rubies : but the lips of knowledge [are] a precious jewel, *much more valuable.*
16 Take his garment that is surety [for] a stranger : and take a pledge of him for a strange woman ; *do not trust that man without good security; who is ready to be bound for a person, he knows*
17 *not who ; especially for a wicked strumpet.* Bread of deceit [is] sweet to a man ; but afterward his mouth shall be filled with gravel ; *as a hungry man who catching at a piece of bread, and finds in his mouth a piece of the mill stone that ground it, so a man*
18 *will regret his unrighteous gains.* [Every] purpose is established by counsel : and with good advice make war ; *do nothing rashly, especially in war, where conduct is often better than cour-*
19 *age.* He that goeth about [as] a talebearer, revealeth secrets : therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips ; *be very careful of a man that comes to you as a talebearer, and pretends to know every one's secrets, for he will reveal yours likewise.*
20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness ; *he shall lose all his comfort and happi-*
21 *ness.* An inheritance [may be] gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed ; *it shall moulder away*
22 *or be embittered.* Say not thou, *when thou hast received an injury,* I will recompense evil, *I will avenge myself in proportion to the offence ;* [but] wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee ; *he shall right thy present wrongs, and defend thee from future ones.*
23 Divers weights [are] an abomination unto the LORD ; and a
24 false balance [is] not good. Man's goings [are] of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way ? *Let us therefore*
25 *mind our duty, and leave events to God.* [It is] a snare to the man [who] devoureth [that which is] holy, *appropriates to his own use what was consecrated to God ;* and after vows to make inquiry *whether it was wise and right ; that should have*
26 *been done first.* A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them. *This is an allusion to a king riding in his chariot, dispersing some sinners by his appearance, and driving*

27 *over and destroying others.* The spirit of man [is] the candle of
the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly; *reason
and conscience are like a lamp that God hath set up in us, and by
which we are capable of searching our hearts; therefore we ought
to use it carefully; and God will examine whether we have worked
or played by this light, and accordingly will doom us to everlasting*
28 *light or darkness.* Mercy and truth preserve the king; *are his
strongest guards:* and his throne is upholden by mercy; *it is
the best security of his government, engaging the favour of God,*
29 *and the affections of his people.* The glory of young men [is] their
strength: and the beauty of old men [is] the grey head;
*each has its beauty, glory, and use. Young men are fitted for dif-
ficult labours, and to defend their country; old men for counsel*
30 *and advice, and therefore should not be slighted.* The blueness of
a wound cleanseth away evil: so [do] stripes the inward parts of
the belly; *those strokes which make a man black and blue, even
those which are as wounds going into the belly, purge out those
corrupt affections which are in the heart. This intimates, that re-
proof, however disagreeable at present, may be attended with hap-
py consequences. In this view, heavy afflictions from the hand of
God may be extremely useful; and it becomes us to receive re-
proofs with thankfulness, and afflictions with all humble submission,
and carefully improve them.*

CHAP. XXI.

1 THE king's heart [is] in the hand of the LORD, [as] the
rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will;
*it is like rivulets of water, which a husbandman turns to which part
of his ground he pleaseth; this is a reason why we should pray for*
2 *kings and all that are in authority.* Every way of a man [is]
right in his own eyes; but the LORD pondereth the hearts; *he
often sees cause to condemn what they approve, and will bring every*
3 *heart under a strict examination.* To do justice and judgment [is]
more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice, *or any other external
observances. A maxim of great importance, especially to the Jews,*
4 *who were prone to trust in their sacrifices and ceremonies.* An
high look, and a proud heart, [and] the ploughing of the wicked,
[is] sin, *when he does not do it with a good intention; or rather,
as in the margin, the light of the wicked, that is, all their worldly*
5 *pomp and glory, is an occasion of sin unto them.* The thoughts of
the diligent, *that is, the prudent and active,* [tend] only to plen-
teousness; but of every one [that is] hasty, *who acts rashly,
and undertakes more business than he can manage,* only to want.
6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue [is] a vanity tossed
to and fro of them that seek death; *it is a vapour dissipated by*
7 *the wind; the treasures are lost, and destruction follows.* The
robbery of the wicked shall destroy them, *or saw them asunder,*

intimating the dreadful agonies of their consciences ; because they refuse to do judgment, *will go on in a wicked course, and not make*
8 *restitution.* The way of man [is] froward and strange ; *that is, the way of froward, perverse men is strange, hateful to God and good men :* but [as for] the pure, his work [is] right ; *he ap-*
9 *proves himself to God, and acts worthily in his station ; you know where to find him and may safely trust him.* [It is] better to dwell in a corner of the house top, *in a poor, silent manner, exposed to all the injuries of the weather,* than with a brawling woman in a wide house, *a house of society. A perverse wife spoils all the pleasure that a man would find in his friends and relations, for she generally sets herself against them ; and there can be no more evident proof of*
10 *folly and perverseness than this.* The soul of the wicked desireth evil : his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes ; *he is of such a malignant temper that he seems to have outgrown all sense of humanity, and spares neither friends nor foes if they stand in*
11 *the way of his evil designs.* When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise : and when the wise is instructed, he
12 receiveth knowledge, *without any such methods of severity.* The righteous [man] wisely considereth the house of the wicked : [but God] overthroweth the wicked for [their] wickedness ; *wise and good men consider the designs of Providence in the prosperity of the wicked and the destruction that often comes upon*
13 *them.* Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard ; *an awful passage that*
14 *should never be forgotten.* A gift in secret pacifieth anger : and a reward in the bosom strong wrath, *and it is prudent where it*
15 *can be honestly bestowed.* [It is] joy to the just to do judgment, *to do it themselves and see it done by others :* but destruction
16 [shall be] to the workers of iniquity. The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead ; *there his wanderings end, there he shall take up his lodging, and be punished in hell with the sinners of the old world.*
17 He that loveth pleasure, *that is, sports and diversions,* [shall be] a poor man : he that loveth wine and oil, *the luxuries and*
18 *delicacies of life,* shall not be rich. The wicked [shall be] a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright ; *they shall suffer that punishment which was intended for the righteous ; and are sometimes instruments of delivering good men*
19 *contrary to their desire.* [It is] better to dwell in the wilderness *quietly, though removed from human converse,* than with a con-
20 tentious and an angry woman. [There is] treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise ; *a person in the lower circumstances of life may with prudent forecast have something decent and handsome to entertain his friends with ;* but a foolish man spendeth
21 it up, *wastes it upon himself, or in extravagance with others.* He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness and honour ; *a comfortable and happy life, and honour among good men and from God ; the true and most satisfactory way to en-*
22 *joy life is to be really religious.* A wise [man] scaleth the city

of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof; *wisdom and conduct are often better than strength.*
23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, *is weary and cautious*
24 *in talking*, keepeth his soul from troubles. Proud [and] haughty scorner [is] his name, who dealeth in proud wrath, *that is his*
25 *proper name, and there cannot be a more odious one.* The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour: *an admirable observation; while men have not the resolution to apply to business, they are tormented with their own wants, with reflections on the necessity of diligence, and their own guilt in neglecting*
26 *it.* He coveteth greedily all the day long: *this is an exceeding beautiful repetition; he desires a desire all the day long; he desires and desires, and there it rests; he will do nothing to secure the thing he desires; and therefore he often wants necessaries:* but the righteous giveth and spareth not; *an honest diligent man not only supports himself, but has wherewith to supply and relieve*
27 *others.* The sacrifice of the wicked [is] abomination: how much more, [when] he bringeth it with a wicked mind? *This is not designed to discourage prayer in the wicked; the meaning is, that a man who goes on in a course of wickedness, and yet keeps up the external forms of religion, is offensive to God, especially when he makes use of religion as a mask to deceive others, or thinks to*
28 *compensate with the Almighty for his sins by his sacrifices.* A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly; *the man that heareth and considereth, speaks with judg-*
29 *ment and success, as he is always believed.* A wicked man hardeneth his face, *endeavours to conquer the shame of having done amiss:* but [as for] the upright, he directeth his way; *examines his actions, and endeavours to live so that he may not blame himself.*
30 [There is] no wisdom, *no natural sagacity,* nor understanding, *no improvement of parts, or human policies,* nor counsel, *that is, confederacies and combinations,* against the LORD, *that shall take*
31 *place to overturn the counsels and designs of God.* The horse [is] prepared against the day of battle: but safety [is] of the LORD; *no military preparations will do, unless he gives success. This is a powerful motive to prayer, especially in time of war, to commit all our national interests and concerns to him, and to go forth in his strength.*

CHAP. XXII.

1 A [GOOD] name [is] rather to be chosen than great riches, [and] loving favour rather than silver and gold; *without the respect and kindness of a man's neighbours and friends his riches will not make him comfortable; let us be thankful if we*
2 *have a good reputation and do nothing to forfeit it.* The rich and poor meet together: the LORD [is] the maker of them all; *with regard to happiness they are much upon the same footing; God*

hath fixed their respective circumstances, and at death they shall all certainly meet together and be upon a level; let the rich there-
3 *fore be humble, and the poor contented.* A prudent [man] fore-seeth the evil and hideth himself; *he makes provision against it:* but the simple pass on and are punished; *they never think of it till they fall into it; this is applicable both to worldly and re-*
4 *ligious concerns.* By humility [and] the fear of the LORD [are]
5 riches, honour, and life. Thorns [and] snares, *continual perplexity and vexation,* [are] in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul, *that watches over his actions and words, and is of a friendly obliging disposition,* shall be far from them.
6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it; *this is generally though not universally true, and a great motive it is to a prudent and pious educa-*
7 *tion of children.* The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower [is] servant to the lender: *this should be a motive to diligence*
8 *and frugality that we may not be dependent upon others.* He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity, *that is, mortification and disappointment*: and the rod of his anger, *the power with which*
9 *he injures others,* shall fail. He that hath a bountiful eye, *who sees and compassionates the misery of others,* shall be blessed; for
10 he giveth of his bread to the poor. Cast out the scorner, *him who disdains advice and counsel, and is obstinately bent on his own way,* and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall
11 cease. He that loveth pureness of heart, *an upright man, who delivers his mind in acceptable language,* [for] the grace of his
12 lips, the king [shall be] his friend. The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, *God graciously watches over those who make his law their rule and religion their care;* and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor; *he cuts short the power of the*
13 *wicked, so that they do not what they intend.* The slothful [man] saith, [There] is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets; *a very unlikely thing to meet a lion in the streets; it shews the*
14 *folly of slothful people's excuses.* The mouth of strange women [is] a deep pit; *their society is a gulf of destruction*: he that is abhorred of the LORD, *who is given up to his wicked lusts,* shall
15 fall therein. Foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child; [but] the rod of correction shall drive it far from him; *in many*
16 *cases this is the only method.* He that oppresseth the poor to increase his [riches, and] he that giveth to the rich, [shall] surely [come] to want; *Providence often delivers unjust men into*
17 *the hands of oppressors, who serve them as they served others.* Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge, *the wise lessons which I teach thee.*
18 For [it is] a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips; *they will be thy delight and*
19 *ornament; and enable thee to speak properly and usefully.* That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee; *I have acquainted thee with these things,*
20 *that thou mayest therefore be encouraged to trust only in God.* Have

not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge;
21 *I refer to thy own judgment and discretion;* That I might make
thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou might-
est answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee? *be
useful to those that consult thee or employ thee in any business;
this is one great advantage of wisdom, that it fits men for useful*
22 *services in life.* Rob not the poor, because he [is] poor: neither
oppress the afflicted in the gate, *that is, in the court of justice;
let him not be overthrown or injured because he wants money to*
23 *defend his cause:* For the LORD, *the supreme judge,* will plead
24 their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them. Make
no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man
25 thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare
to thy soul; *lest his passions provoke thine; or lest his exam-*
26 *ple corrupt thee, and lead thee into sin.* Be not thou [one] of
them that strike hands, [or] of them that are sureties for debts.
27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed
from under thee? *It is prudent to avoid being bound for others,
lest the creditor in the rage of his disappointment go beyond what
the law allows, and reduce thee to great extremity through thy own*
28 *folly.* Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers
29 have set, *for the distinction of one inheritance from another.* Seest
thou a man diligent in his business, *a man that looks about him,
is active and diligent in his own proper work,* he shall stand be-
fore kings; he shall not stand before mean [men;] *he is
likely to rise and be advanced in life. If we desire to stand be-
fore the King of kings, and to be numbered among his favourites,
let us not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the
Lord.*

CHAP. XXIII.

1 WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler, *or any person of
superior rank or quality,* consider diligently what [is]
before thee, *and how easily thou mayest be drawn into excess:*
2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou [be] a man given to appe-
tite; *use any violence with thyself rather than fall into intemper-*
3 *ance.* Be not desirous of his dainties: for they [are] deceitful
meat; *persons by visiting those above their rank get an habit of
high living, which often proves a snare to them; plain fare is less
expensive, more nourishing, and free from the temptations which*
4 *attend dainty meats.* Labour not to be rich; *fatigue not thyself;
make not a slavery of business; set bounds to thy contrivances;
do not place thy happiness in riches, nor seek them too eagerly:*
cease from thine own wisdom, *which may prompt thee to such a*
5 *dangerous and destructive conduct.* Wilt thou set thine eyes
upon that which is not? for [riches] certainly make themselves
wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven. *Solomon,*

though a rich man, speaks of riches in a very contemptuous manner here, as if they had no real existence. They are often lost through such an excessive desire of more, as sets men upon hazardous enterprises, which, if they do not succeed, lessen their former gain; while hoarding them up is but letting their wings grow, which makes
6 *them more readily fly away.* Eat thou not the bread of [him that hath] an evil eye, *a man of a covetous temper, who grudgeth thee every thing thou eatest;* neither desire thou his dainty meats:
7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart [is] not with thee; *he is to be judged of by his disposition, and not by his compliments; whatever he says,*
8 *he has no real regard for thee.* The morsel [which] thou hast eaten shalt thou *wish to* vomit up, and lose thy sweet words;
9 *repent of all thy compliments and thanks.* Speak not in the ears
10 of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. Remove not the old land mark; and enter not into the fields of the
11 fatherless, *who are not able to right themselves.* For their Redeemer [is] mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee; *if they have no near relation, kinsman, or friend to avenge their wrong,*
12 *God will do it.* Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine
13 ears to the words of knowledge. Withhold not correction from the child *out of foolish pity:* for [if] thou beatest him with the
14 rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell; *save him from those sinful courses*
15 *that might lead him to destruction.* My son, if thine heart be
16 wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things, *and nothing that savours*
17 *of impiety to God or undutifulness to me.* Let not thine heart envy sinners: but [be thou] in the fear of the LORD all the day long; *this will preserve thee from all corrupt affections and irreg-*
18 *ular passions.* For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off; *thou wilt not upon the whole lose by thy*
19 *religion, but have a glorious reward here and hereafter.* Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way
20 *which I prescribe to thee.* Be not among wine bibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh; *avoid the society of gluttons and drunk-*
21 *ards:* For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe [a man] with rags; *an idle, trifling, sleepy habit, will make men neglect their business, and expose them*
22 *to want and infamy.* Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old, *for her age is an*
23 *additional argument for thy dutiful regards to her.* Buy the truth *at any price,* and sell [it] not *upon any consideration whatever, for thou wilt surely lose by the bargain;* [also] wisdom, and in-
24 struction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have
25 joy of him, *in the virtue and regularity of his behaviour.* Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice; *all her pains in thy birth and education shall be abundantly*
26 *repaid.* My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe

my ways; *do not only look grave and attentive, but set thine heart and affections on what I say, and see that thou actest on the rules*
27 *I have given thee, and after the example I have set thee.* For a whore [is] a deep ditch; and a strange woman [is] a narrow
pit; *a man may easily slide into them, but it may be difficult if not*
28 *impossible to get out.* She also lieth in wait as [for] a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men; *whatever professions of love she might make, she draws multitudes into sin and ruin.*
29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath
30 redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. *This shows the mischief of drunkenness, that it hurts the body, the character, the comfort of life, the peace of*
31 *society, and the good order of the world.* Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, [when] it moveth itself aright. *A most lively and beautiful passage, in which the wine is compared to a wicked woman, who puts on her*
32 *most graceful and attractive airs to allure the unwary.* At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder; *it will*
be rank poison in thy veins, destroy thy peace and ruin thy soul.
33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things; *thy lustful desires will be inflamed, and thine heart or tongue utter filthy, scurrilous, blasphemous words,*
34 *without prudence, and without decency.* Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast, *who falls asleep where he was set to watch; he*
is liable to be tossed off every moment, and perish without remedy,
35 *yet thinks himself secure, and sleeps soundly.* They have stricken me, [shalt thou say, and] I was not sick; they have beaten me, [and] I felt [it] not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again; *notwithstanding all the dangers which the sot runs through, and the indignities and injuries he suffers in his drink, no sooner doth he awake but he runs the same round of folly and extravagance. This beautifully expresses the confidence and obstinacy of drunkards, whose senses and understanding are so stupified that they fear no danger. An awful warning to us all, to take heed, lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness; for we may soon go from bad to worse, and never be roused, till we fall into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, and which the word of God assures us shall be the portion of all drunkards; therefore let us stand in awe and sin not.*

CHAP. XXIV.

1 BE not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them; *do not think them so happy as to wish thyself*
2 *in their circumstances.* For their heart studieth destruction, and
3 their lips talk of mischief. Through wisdom is an house

builded ; and by understanding it is established : *that is, by prudence and discretion families are supported and handsomely main-*
4 *tained :* And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches ; *all things necessary for con-*
5 *venience and ornament.* A wise man [is] strong ; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength ; *he knows how to defend and secure himself, and is not exposed to so many dangers and perplex-*
6 *ities as others.* For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war : and in multitude of counsellors [there is] safety; *it is prudent to think of important matters frequently and closely, and to take the*
7 *advice of others.* Wisdom [is] too high for a fool : he openeth not his mouth in the gate ; *he may be loud and noisy enough among his vain companions, but when he comes among the judges, or to the places where wise men resort, he has nothing to say, or, if he speaks, he is treated with contempt. What an idea does this scripture give us of a great many of those gay fluttering creatures,*
8 *who think themselves so very considerable !* He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person ; *a malignant wretch, who breaks in upon the comforts of human life, and shall become*
9 *odious and hateful to mankind.* The thought of foolishness [is] sin ; *it is sinful to harbour evil thoughts, and will expose men to the condemnation of an heart searching God :* and the scorner,
10 *who openly makes a jest of sin,* [is] an abomination to men. [If] thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength [is] small ; *if thou sink into despair and melancholy, and art discouraged from thy duty, it shows the mind to be weak and unfortified. Great pains therefore should be taken to keep up the firmness of the mind,*
11 *and not to sink under little difficulties and troubles.* If thou forbear *to do thy utmost* to deliver [them that are] drawn unto death, and [those that are] ready to be slain, *who are unjustly*
12 *condemned, or violently assaulted ;* If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not, *either his danger, or innocence, or the way to deliver him ;* doth not he that pondereth the heart consider [it ?] and he that keepeth, *or preserveth,* thy soul, doth [not] he know [it ?] *how far thy excuses and reasons are well grounded :* and shall [not] he render to [every] man according to his works ? *Sins of omission are charged to our account, especially a neglect of doing good to others, and much more of delivering their souls from de-*
13 *struction.* My son, eat thou honey, because [it is] good ; and the honeycomb [which is] sweet to thy taste ; *you are determined*
14 *in your choice of diet, by its being agreeable to your taste :* So [shall] the knowledge of wisdom [be] unto thy soul : when thou hast found [it,] then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off ; *it is not only delightful at present, but shall*
15 *be abundantly rewarded.* Lay not wait, O wicked [man,] *secretly,* against the dwelling of the righteous ; spoil not *openly* his rest-
16 ing place : For a just [man] falleth seven times, and riseth up again ; *he falleth into trouble many times, and God delivereth him :* but the wicked shall fall into mischief, *into irrecoverable destruc-*
17 *tion.* Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth *into a calamitous*

condition, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:
18 Lest the LORD see [it,] and it displease him, and he turn away
his wrath from him, *and turn it upon thee, for thy malicious,*
19 *wicked joy.* Fret not thyself because of evil [men,] neither be
20 thou envious at the wicked; For there shall be no reward to the
evil [man;] the candle of the wicked shall be put out; *all his*
21 *comfort and hopes shall be lost at once.* My son, fear thou the
LORD and the king: [and] meddle not with them that are given
22 to change:* For their calamity shall rise suddenly, *by precipi-*
tate measures men may ruin themselves and those about them: and
who knoweth the ruin of them both? *of those that fear not God*
23 *and the king.* These [things] also [belong] to the wise, *who*
may receive further instruction. [It is] not good to have respect
of persons in judgment; *it is enormously wicked to consider their*
relation, wealth, greatness, friendship, connections, or any thing but
24 *the merits of the case.* He that saith unto the wicked, Thou
[art] righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor
him; *his countrymen and other nations that hear of his crime, shall*
25 *abhor him:* But to them that rebuke [him] shall be delight, *a*
faithful reprover shall be honoured, and a good blessing, *the bless-*
ing of a good man, or the blessing of the wicked who become good,
26 shall come upon them. [Every man] shall kiss [his] lips that
giveth a right answer; *he will be greatly esteemed for his pru-*
27 *dence and good understanding.* Prepare thy work without, and
make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterward build thine
house; *this is capable of two senses, and both very important.*
Prepare for thy work a booth or hut in the field, and afterward
build a house; begin low and live sparingly, and afterward
build. An important maxim which few attend to, though they see
others ruined for want of regarding it. Or it may refer to pru-
dence in undertaking any great work, and be a caution not to begin
a great, expensive undertaking, till there be substance to complete
28 *it, and the necessary materials be prepared.* Be not a witness
against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive [not] with
thy lips; *do not endeavour by crafty insinuations to draw others*
29 *into an ill opinion of him, though he has injured thee.* Say not, I
will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the
man according to his work; *our having been injured or deceived*
by others, gives us no toleration to injure and deceive them. The
30 *rest of the chapter is a beautiful and instructive parable.* I went
by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void
31 of understanding; *these are synonimous terms;* And, lo, it was
all grown over with thorns, [and] nettles had covered the face
thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down: *we see*
many people's fields and gardens in this condition, and we often see
the like within doors as well as without; many persons are in a
32 *continual litter and confusion through mere idleness.* Then I saw,

* We are not here forbidden to attempt a change in a bad government when Providence gives an opportunity: it is only a general intimation of the imprudence of attempting it without just grounds and reasonable expectation of success.

[and] considered [it] well: I looked upon [it, and] received instruction; *the wisest men may and ought to learn instruction from impertinent, idle, useless creatures; if we will consider their example and conduct well, we may learn to avoid their errors, and*
33 *do better ourselves.* [Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep *a little longer, and then I will put*
34 *my good resolutions into practice:* So shall thy poverty come [as] one that travelleth, *silently, insensibly, and unexpectedly,* and thy want as an armed man; *at length it shall seize thee in a powerful, irresistible manner. We have too many such instances as this before our eyes: let us look upon them; consider them well; and receive instruction: God intends that we should do so. Industry is a duty we owe to God, to ourselves, to our families, and to society. As we desire to secure our substance, our comfort, our credit, our usefulness, and the favour of God, let us not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*

CHAP. XXV.

1 THESE [are] also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of
2 Hezekiah* king of Judah copied out. [It is] the glory of God to conceal a thing, *the reasons of his judgments and decrees:* but the honour of kings [is] to search out a matter; *to search*
3 *out secret contrivances and intricate cases.* The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings [is] unsearchable *to vulgar minds, and prudently concealed from others. These two verses are an important lesson to princes not to indulge themselves in an idle life, but to inquire diligently into things, and make necessary remarks upon them, and yet maintain a prudent re-*
4 *serve.* Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall
5 come forth a *beautiful* vessel for the finer. Take away the wicked [from] before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness; *remove wicked ministers, and then the*
6 *public affairs will go on prosperously.* Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great [men;] *do not appear too splendid for one of thy rank, nor affect*
7 *a higher place than becomes thee.* For better, *more honourable,* [it is] that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen, *which must be very mortifying, (Luke* xiv.
8 9.) Go not forth hastily to strive *without due consideration, either in battle, or at law,* lest [thou know not] what to do in the
9 end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour [himself;] and discover not a secret to another, *that is, a secret quarrel: a maxim particularly to be regarded by husbands and wives if they should have any*

* These were probably some prophets that Hezekiah selected out of the public schools, to attend in his court as domestic chaplains; they copied these proverbs out of some private collections, and published them for general instruction. A useful design, as many of them contain as much important sense and solidity as any that were before made public.

10 *differences:* Lest he that heareth [it] put thee to shame, and
thine infamy turn not away; *lest by telling the story he expose*
11 *thee to contempt.* A word fitly spoken [is like] apples of gold in
pictures of silver, *or rather,* '*like oranges in a basket of wrought*
silver,' *which must look extremely beautiful. Such words as these*
have a rich and valuable meaning, beside the handsome manner in
12 *which they are spoken.* [As] an earring of gold, and an orna-
ment of fine gold, [so is] a wise reprover upon an obedient ear;
far from thinking himself wronged or being provoked by it, he es-
13 *teems it precious.* As the cold of snow, *or a cooling breeze,* in
the time of harvest, [so is] a faithful messenger to them that
send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters, *who were*
14 *ready to faint under the apprehension of ill success.* Whoso
boasteth himself of a false gift, *of fine compliments not answered,*
and fine promises not performed, [is like] clouds and wind without
15 rain, *which disappoint the expectation.* By long forbearing is a
prince persuaded, *whereas by violent opposition he is more incensed;*
and a soft tongue breaketh the bone, *overcomes the most stub-*
16 *born resolution.* Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is
sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it:
this is applicable to all worldly delights, use them with moderation.
17 Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be
weary of thee, and [so] hate thee; *do not frequently press in*
upon him, or tarry too long, for that is hindering his business and
thy own. There is such a thing as making ourselves too cheap; a
caution which ministers should attend to above all other persons.
18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour [is] a
maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow; *a complicated instrument of*
mischief, it smites and bruises like a maul, it pierces like a sword,
when near at hand, and at a distance it wounds like a sharp arrow,
19 *so that a man is never out of its reach.* Confidence in an un-
faithful man in time of trouble [is like] a broken tooth, and a foot
out of joint; *they are not only useless but troublesome, when there*
20 *is occasion to use them.* [As] he that taketh away a gar-
ment in cold weather, *which is very unseasonable,* [and as] vine-
gar upon nitre, *which makes a great ferment,* so [is] he that sing-
eth songs to an heavy heart; *it makes him more melancholy than*
21 *before.* If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and
22 if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap
coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee;
the human mind is so formed as to be won by kindness, and is as
sensible of it as the body is of burning coals applied to the tenderest
23 *part.* The north wind driveth away rain; so [doth] an an-
gry countenance a backbiting tongue; *if it be proper no other*
way to reprove it, an angry countenance may testify our strong dis-
like, and make the slanderer unwilling to vent his illnature in our
24 *presence. This is applicable to hearing prophaneness, &c.* [It is]
better to dwell in the corner of the house top, than with a brawl-
25 ing woman and in a wide house. [As] cold waters to a thirsty soul,
so [is] good news from a far country, *from which it is hard to get*

intelligence. We have reason to bless God for the art of writing, for the convenience of posts, and such easy conveyance of intelligence from our absent friends; especially for good news from
26 *heaven.* A righteous man falling down before the wicked, *being oppressed and trampled upon by him,* [is as] a troubled
27 fountain, and a corrupt spring, *a public calamity.* [It is] not good to eat much honey *though very pleasant:* so [for men] to search their own glory [is not] glory; *to hunt after applause is dishonourable, it counterbalances and lessens all the other beauties of*
28 *a man's character.* He that [hath] no rule over his own spirit, *that cannot bear affronts and provocations with meekness, and afflictions with patience,* [is like] a city [that is] broken down, [and] without walls; *he is liable to every surprize, is very contemptible, and is exposed to innumerable mischiefs. Let us labour after the government of ourselves; and learn of Christ, who was meek and lowly in heart; so shall we find honour, security, and peace to our souls.*

CHAP. XXVI.

1 AS snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, *which prevent reaping and gathering in the fruits of the earth,* so honour is not seemly for a fool; *though he may look grand, he knows*
2 *not how to use it, and does mischief with it.* As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come; *a man is in no more danger from the causeless curse of others, than from the flying of a bird over his head;*
3 *it fixes no where except upon him that uttered it.* A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back; *a foolish wicked man must be taught and restrained by se-*
4 *vere methods; no others will do.* Answer not a fool according to
5 his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit; *do not answer every impertinent speech or accusation of a clamorous fool; it is the better way to despise him: but if he should grow insolent from your silence, a wise man may condescend to mortify him. A person must judge for himself which is most proper; but it is best in general to be silent, there is no surer way to mortify a fool.*
6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the feet, [and] drinketh damage; *such a messenger will make lame work of his message, and bring inconveniences on him that employs*
7 *him.* The legs of the lame are not equal, *which gives a man a disagreeable air, especially if he affects agility:* so [is] a parable in the mouth of fools; *so ridiculous is it for wicked men to ap-*
8 *plaud and recommend virtue; it only makes their own wickedness the more conspicuous.* As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, *which is presently thrown out,* so [is] he that giveth honour to a

9 fool; *it will not continue with him.* [As] a thorn goeth up into
the hand of a drunkard, so [is] a parable in the mouth of fools;
*a drunkard when stumbling catcheth hold of a thorn to support
him, which wounds him. Thus wicked men, when they talk of re-
ligion, meddle to their hurt. A wicked man thinks to support him-
self by it; but he only hurts his character the more, though his*
10 *parable be ever so fine.* The great [God] that formed all [things]
both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors, *though he*
11 *may suffer them to go on a great while.* As a dog returneth to
his vomit, [so] a fool returneth to his folly; *he commits the same
errors for which he formerly smarted and professed to repent of,*
12 *and so becomes odious to God and man.* Seest thou a man wise
in his own conceit? [there is] more hope of a fool than of
him, *that is, of one that has hardly common sense; he is a fool*
13 *of God's making, the other makes himself so.* The slothful [man]
saith; [There is] a lion in the way, a lion [is] in the streets: *thus
idle people frighten themselves from business; raise imaginary
difficulties and aggravate real ones. Many of these lions stand in*
14 *the way on the Lord's day.* [As] the door turneth upon his
15 hinges, so [doth] the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hid-
eth his hand in [his] bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to
his mouth. *A beautiful gradation; he does not care to stir or
rise out of his bed: when he is up, he does not care to stretch
out his hand to feed himself, and would be glad to eat by proxy.
Thus habits of idleness grow: the less a man doth, the less he is*
16 *disposed to do.* The sluggard [is] wiser in his own conceit
than seven men that can render a reason; *as stupid a creature
as he is, he has a great conceit of his own abilities, though he has*
17 *nothing to say in defence of his opinions or practices.* He that
passeth by, [and] meddleth with strife [belonging] not to him,
[is like] one that taketh a dog by the ears; *he gets the displeas-*
18 *ure of both parties, and is often hurt in the quarrel.* As a mad
19 [man] who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, So [is] the man
[that] deceiveth his neighbour, *who leads him into sin or im-
poses upon him,* and saith, Am not I in sport? *pretends that he
means no harm, only to make himself and others merry; while vice
is thus encouraged, guilt contracted, and great mischief is done.*
20 Where no wood is, [there] the fire goeth out: so where [there
is] no talebearer, the strife ceaseth, *therefore when you meet*
21 *with such persons frown upon them.* [As] coals [are] to burning
coals, and wood to fire, *kindling one another,* so [is] a contentious
man to kindle strife; *he is easily inflamed himself and quickly*
22 *kindles others.* The words of a talebearer [are] as wounds, and
they go down into the innermost parts of the belly, *do secret,*
23 *yet deep, and incurable injury.* Burning lips and a wicked
heart, *ill natured, satyrical terms, especially when used to expose
what is virtuous and good, and to countenance vice,* [are like] a
potsherd, *or piece of broken pot or crucible* covered with silver
dross, *in which silver has been melted, and is spread over it; so
contemptible is wicked wit. Many of the satyrical productions of*

24 *our celebrated poets are of this nature.* He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him ; *he intends a man's ruin when he makes a profession of friendship ;*
25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not : for [there are] seven abominations in his heart ; *when you have once discovered a man to be of that disposition, you have need of the greatest caution in*
26 *dealing with him ; he is a most dangerous enemy.* [Whose] hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be showed before the [whole] congregation ; *he will probably be exposed to mankind, and become universally contemptible ; and certainly be exposed to*
27 *the view of the whole world at the judgment day.* Whoso diggeth a pit, *with an evil design,* shall fall therein : and he that rolleth a stone, *to injure others,* it will return upon him, *and hurt*
28 *himself.* A lying tongue hateth [those that are] afflicted by it ; *it is hard for those who have done an injury to respect the person wronged ; they still go on to do more ;* and a flattering mouth worketh ruin ; *persons by being courted and applauded are often ruined. Hence we see what mischief deceit, falsehood, and flattery do in the world, and bring on those who practise them. Let it then be our ambition to be christians indeed, in whom there is no guile.*

CHAP. XXVII.

1 BOAST not thyself of tomorrow, *what thou wilt do, or expectest to receive ;* for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth ; *it may render fruitless all thy designs and ex-*
2 *pectations ; death, or a thousand accidents, may do it.* Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth ; a stranger, and not thine own lips ; *to praise thyself is indecent and imprudent ; it disposes others to undervalue thee, and defraud thee of*
3 *thy just commendation.* A stone [is] heavy, and the sand weighty ; but a fool's wrath [is] heavier than them both ; *he can neither correct it himself, nor can another restrain it by any rational considerations, till it break out in the most insatiable cruelty.*
4 Wrath [is] cruel, and anger [is] outrageous ; but who [is] able to stand before envy ? *A man can better guard against the effects of anger than envy, as that works secretly to do another an injury.*
5 Open rebuke [is] better than secret love ; *a friend who reproves*
6 *is better than one who may have an equal degree of love, but doth not show it that way.* Faithful [are] the wounds of a friend ; *sharp reproofs therefore ought to be thankfully received ;* but the kisses of an enemy [are] deceitful ; *compliments and flattering ex-*
7 *pressions ought therefore to be suspected.* The full soul loatheth an honeycomb ; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet : *this shows the advantage of poverty, and the vanity of*
8 *riches.* As a bird that wandereth from her nest, *and leaves her eggs to be broken or her young ones to be destroyed,* so [is] a man

that wandereth from his place, *who forsakes the station in which Providence hath placed him. When heads of families are needlessly absent from home, their domestic affairs take a bad turn, and the love of pleasure and of gadding abroad often exposes young peo-*
9 *ple to temptation and ruin.* Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so [doth] the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty
10 counsel. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, *whom thou and he have found sincere,* forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: [for] better [is] a neighbour [that is] near, than a brother far off; *we often meet with more kindness in trouble from friends than from near relations; therefore be friendly, get and keep good friends, and show*
11 *some regard to the ancient friendships of the family.* My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me, *and charges thy miscarriages upon my want of care in*
12 *thy education.* A prudent [man] foreseeth the evil *of sin and future misery,* [and] hideth himself *from it;* [but] the simple pass on, [and] are punished. *This is applicable to this world and another.*
13 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman; *if a man be bound for others, he knows not who, especially persons of bad character, do not trust*
14 *him without good security, for he is in the way to ruin.* He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice; rising early in the morning; it shall be counted a curse to him; *there is an excess and officiousness of complaisance, which instead of serving and pleas-*
15 *ing hurts and disobliges.* A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike; *a man cannot go abroad*
16 *with comfort, or stay at home with quiet.* Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind; *he who would keep her tongue under government or conceal her shame, may as well undertake to keep the wind from blowing;* and the ointment of his right hand, [which] bewrayeth [itself;] *a man may grasp a perfume in his hand, and think thereby to conceal it, but growing warm it will smell the more.*
17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend; *friendship if rightly managed is of the greatest use; wise friends whet one anothers minds, and increase each others*
18 *piety and usefulness.* Whoso keepeth the figtree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured; *he who is diligent in his business, and watcheth over his master's reputation and substance, shall be respected and rewarded.*
19 As in water, face [answereth] to face, so the heart of man to man: *there is a great resemblance runs through human nature; by knowing one's own heart, we may make a good guess at others;*
20 *therefore let us take pains to know our own.* Hell and destruction, *or the grave,* are never full; so the eyes of man, *that is, the desires of a worldly man after worldly things,* are never satisfi-
21 ed. [As] the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, *for its trial and examination;* so [is] a man to his praise; *a man of vanity and little worth is elevated and intoxicated with it, but a man of a truly worthy and valuable character will not be so; he*

will direct all to God, make allowances for the partiality of his
22 *friends, and use it with caution.* Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, [yet] will not his foolishness depart from him; *though you should use the most violent methods for his reformation, and to reproof and chiding add rebukes, and blows, yet they will have no good effect upon such an*
23 *obstinate creature.* Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, [and] look well to thy herds. *An admirable rule, not only for husbandmen, but for all masters and mistresses: they should*
24 *look to their affairs themselves, and not trust to servants.* For riches [are] not for ever: and doth the crown [endure] to every generation? *The greatest plenty and the largest estate may be lost for want of prudence and good economy; even a*
25 *princely fortune may be sunk without care.* The hay appeareth, and the tender grass showeth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered; *these grow, and there is a time for gathering them, after which they will be spoiled; therefore make hay while the sun shines, and gather herbs in their season, then they will turn to a*
26 *good account.* The lambs [are] for thy clothing, and the goats [are] the price of the field, *to pay the rent, yea, by good manage-*
27 *ment, to purchase the estate.* And [thou shalt have] goat's milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and [for] the maintenance for thy maidens. *The meaning of these verses is, that as in husbandry men must look to their affairs, attend to the proper season of doing business, sowing, reaping, shearing, &c. so must all others be diligent to know the state of their affairs, prudent in the management of them, and punctual in the dispatch of business and payment of debts; then, with the blessing of God, they will prosper. These cautions are very necessary, since we see so many reduced to distress for want of attending to them, from whose calamities we should learn wisdom.*

CHAP. XXVIII.

1 THE wicked flee when no man pursueth; *an evil conscience makes men cowards:* but the righteous are bold as a lion; *they proceed with resolution in the most hazardous undertakings; what reason then is there to pray that our soldiers and*
2 *sailors may be righteous!* For the transgression of a land many [are] the princes thereof; *many changes are in the government, at least in those that administer it:* but by a man of understanding [and] knowledge the state [thereof] shall be prolonged; *one wise and upright minister may reduce every thing to*
3 *order and secure its prosperity.* A poor man that oppresseth the poor [is like] a sweeping rain which leaveth no food; *like a violent torrent destroying the fruits of the earth, instead of refresh-*
4 *ing them.* They that forsake the law, praise the wicked; *sinners keep one another in countenance:* but such as keep the law

contend with them: *it is a sign of real piety to oppose the wicked.* Evil men understand not judgment; *their minds are depraved, and they cannot judge between right and wrong:* but they that seek the LORD understand all [things;] *they that seek direction from his word and spirit will not err.* Better [is] the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than [he that is] perverse [in his] ways, though he [be] rich; *who gains his riches by dishonest practices, or by shuffling ways, which is the proper sense of the word.* Whoso keepeth the law, *who observes the rules of sobriety, temperance and other virtues,* [is] a wise son, *and his parents have honour and comfort in him:* but he that is a companion of riotous [men] shameth his father, *who ought to have restrained him and taught him better.* He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor, *who will exercise the charity he has neglected.* He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer [shall be] abomination, *instead of making up the deficiency of his actions.* Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, *who attempts to seduce upright men into dangerous practices,* he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good [things] in possession; *the peculiar reward of that virtue, which triumphs over the snares of a seducing world.* The rich man [is] wise in his own *proud* conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out; *in his discourse he finds him to be but a fool.* When righteous [men] do rejoice, [there is] great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden; *men are glad to conceal themselves for fear of ill usage:* He that covereth his sins, *who excuses or lessens them,* shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh [them] shall have mercy; *confession and reformation must go together.* Happy [is] the man that feareth alway; *who has an habitual awe and reverence of the divine Being and his own conscience:* but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. [As] a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; [so is] a wicked ruler over the poor people, *who are not able to resist his power.* The prince that wanteth understanding [is] also a great oppressor: [but] he that hateth covetousness shall prolong [his] days; *a maxim applicable to private as well as public life.* A man that doeth violence to the blood of [any] person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him; *he shall be so universally abhorred that his neighbours shall not endeavour to save him. It is wrong to intercede for such persons, and it is the glory of a king not to pardon them, though of the highest rank.* Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but [he that is] perverse [in his] ways shall fall at once; *he who thinks to save himself by artifice and deceit, shall sometime or other fall, so that nothing can preserve him.* He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread; *prudent, frugal persons shall thrive:* but he that followeth after vain [persons], *frequents idle and loose company to the neglect of his business,* shall have poverty enough. A faithful man, *both in word and deed,* shall

abound with blessings *from God and man:* but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent; *he brings misery upon himself: it is impossible to be very eager after riches, without vio-*
21 *lating integrity and a good conscience.* To have respect of persons [is] not good; for, for a piece of bread [that] man will transgress; *he will get such a habit of injustice as to sell his integrity*
22 *for a dinner.* He that hasteth to be rich [hath] an evil eye, *he envies every one that gets more than himself, and grudges every penny he parts with, especially in charity,* and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him: *this is a paradox; one would think that the covetous man would consider most of all the best way to thrive, yet in fact he does not, because he doth not secure the blessing of heaven by generous and charitable actions.*
23 He that rebuketh a man, *though he may displease him at first,* afterward shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue; *we ought to consider how men will look upon us at last.*
24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, [It is] no transgression; the same [is] the companion of a destroyer; *he is as bad as any other robber. Children should be content with what their parents allow them; and parents who have it in their power should allow their children some spending money, that they may be under no temptation to steal. Let us all remember that it is not our persuading ourselves an action is lawful that will make it*
25 *so: it is our duty to examine and consider.* He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat, *that is, shall live comfortably; while nothing makes a man's life more miserable than strife, and living in contention with his neighbours and relations.*
26 He that trusteth in his own heart, *who relies entirely on his own judgment,* is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, *who takes and follows good advice,* he
27 shall be delivered. He that giveth unto the poor, shall not lack; *he procures the blessing of God upon his substance:* but he that hideth his eyes, *who does not desire to know those in distress lest he should be obliged to relieve them,* shall have many a curse;
28 *men will censure him, and God will punish him.* When the wicked rise *to power and dignity,* men hide themselves, *that they may not suffer injury by them:* but when they perish, the righteous increase; *they openly show themselves, and their numbers increase by their mutual example and encouragement. We here see how much need good men have to strengthen and countenance one another, and how earnestly we should pray that all who are in authority may be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.*

CHAP. XXIX.

1 HE that being often reproved *by good men, perhaps corrected by God himself, but obstinately goes on in his former wicked courses, and* hardeneth [his] neck, shall suddenly be de-
2 stroyed, and that without remedy. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn; *groan under their oppression, not daring per-*
3 *haps to speak aloud.* Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father, *who is sincerely desirous of his welfare:* but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth [his] substance, *and grieveth his*
4 *friends.* The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts *to pervert judgment,* overthroweth it, *though*
5 *it was well established before.* A man that flattereth his neigh-
6 bour spreadeth a net for his feet; *leads him into mischief.* In the transgression of an evil man [there is] a snare; *he finds himself undone by the means whereby he thought to ruin others:* but the righteous doth sing and rejoice *under the protection of God.*
7 The righteous considereth the cause of the poor, *that he may do him justice:* [but] the wicked regardeth not to know [it;] *he expects no advantage from it, and therefore will not give him-*
8 *self the trouble to inquire into it.* Scornful men bring a city into a snare; but wise [men] turn away wrath; *they divert the fury*
9 *of men, which the scorner enrageth.* [If] a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, [there is] no rest; *whether he dispute a matter with him, or seek to reclaim him, whether he taketh it well or ill, be pleased or displeased, it hath no good effect; the best way is to keep at a distance from such*
10 *persons.* The blood thirsty hate the upright: but the just seek
11 his soul, *do him all the good offices he can.* A fool uttereth all his mind; *tells every thing he knows, without considering time or persons:* but a wise [man] keepeth it in till afterward; *chooses the most convenient time and circumstances, and thinks before he speaks: a maxim which young people in particular should attend to.*
12 If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants [are] wicked; *they*
13 *will arm themselves with his authority to injure others.* The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes. *The poor, as opposed to deceitful, may signify persons of great simplicity; and the deceitful may mean great politicians and cunning men: now whatever knowledge and sagacity they have God gives it them; he can enlighten the poor to guard*
14 *against the snares of the artful, and humble the deceitful.* The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever *by the affections of his people, and the blessing of a*
15 *righteous God.* The rod and reproof give wisdom; *they should be used together; correction without reproof is very absurd:* but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame, *who by her imprudent fondness has probably done most to spoil him.*
16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but

17 the righteous shall see their fall. Correct thy son, and he shall
give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul, *to see*
18 *him reclaimed from his evil courses.* Where [there is] no vision,
no public instruction, no knowledge of religion, the people perish;
grow licentious and wicked, and so are destroyed: but he that
keepeth the law, happy [is] he; *he shall remain in a prosperous,*
19 *peaceful condition.* A servant will not be corrected by words:
for though he understand he will not answer: *a servant that*
will not bear a reproof, or take a hint of advice, but is of a conceited,
20 *sullen spirit, is a wretched character.* Seest thou a man [that is]
hasty in his words, *who is rash and conceited, and will not take*
advice nor submit to direction? [there is] more hope of a fool than
of him; *better employ a man that has scarce common sense, if he*
21 *will be ruled.* He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a
child shall have him become [his] son at the length; *he who*
treats servants with too much familiarity and indulgence, will often
find them become insolent and saucy, and expect as much as children.
Where servants are treated with kindness, it should be their care
22 *not to abuse it, but to be so much the more solicitous to please.* An
angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in
transgression *against God and man; therefore we should take great*
23 *care to command our passions.* A man's pride shall bring him
low; *shall make him the contempt and derision of all:* but honour
shall uphold the humble in spirit; *an obliging disposition will*
24 *win upon others and gain many friends.* Whoso is partner with
a thief hateth his own soul; *endangers both his life and everlast-*
ing salvation: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth [it] not, *that*
is, he hears the adjuration, yet does not discover the truth; alluding
to a law that appointed the oath of the Lord to be given to a person
25 *suspected of theft.* The fear of man bringeth a snare; *cowar-*
dice and excessive complaisance lead men to do wicked things: but
whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe; *shall find*
security in the greatest dangers, though men should be displeased
with him for not complying with them. It is of more importance
26 *to please God than men.* Many seek the ruler's favour; but
every man's judgment [cometh] from the LORD, *therefore it is*
of more importance to secure his favour than theirs, since final
27 *judgment comes from him, as well as worldly prosperity.* An
unjust man, *though ever so great and powerful*, [is] an abomina-
tion to the just, *and ought not to be courted or countenanced:* and
[he that is] upright in the way, *though ever so excellent and*
useful, [is] abomination to the wicked, *yet he is highly esteemed of*
the Lord. Therefore let us secure an interest in the friendship of
God, for his judgment is always according to truth.

CHAP. XXX.

1 THE words of Agur* the son of Jakeh, [even] the pro-
phecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and
2 Ucal, Surely I [am] more brutish than [any] man, and have
not the understanding of a man; *an expression of great modesty*
3 *and humility.* I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge
of the holy; *I have no great natural abilities or acquired learn-*
ing, but will plainly instruct you in the precepts of a pious life.
4 *Being asked, What is God? he answers,* Who hath ascended
up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in
his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath
established all the ends of the earth? what [is] his name, and
what [is] his son's name, if thou canst tell? *Who hath ascended*
and descended to learn his mind and declare it? Who can ex-
plain his nature and operations?
5 Every word of God [is] pure: he [is] a shield unto them
that put their trust in him; *rather, have a regard to his revealed*
will, and trust in him; then you will be guided and protected.
6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be
found a liar; *lest he take vengeance on thee as a deceiver.*
7 Two [things] have I required of thee, deny me [them] not
before I die: *they inquired, What is a happy life, and what they*
8 *should pray for?* Remove far from me vanity and lies; *immod-*
erate desires after the world, and deceitful methods of seeking and
gaining it: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with
food convenient for me; *fix me in the middle condition of life,*
and if I should be so vain as to think riches will be no snare to me,
9 *disappoint my expectations:* Lest I be full, and deny [thee,] and
say, Who [is] the LORD? *lest I become ungodly and irreligious:*
or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God [in
vain;] *forswear myself to cover the theft.*
10 Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and
thou be found guilty; *make not any one unnecessarily your ene-*
my, no not the meanest. It is kind to tell a master a servant's
faults, if he does not know them; but we are not to slander him,
or accuse him falsely, lest he call upon God for justice, and he pun-
ish us accordingly. They then ask, What company shall we
choose? He answers,
11 [There is] a generation [that] curseth their father, and doth
not bless their mother; *avoid the company of disobedient, unduti-*
12 *ful children.* [There is] a generation [that are] pure in their
own eyes, and [yet] is not washed from their filthiness; *who*
are exact in external forms, but guilty of gross immoralities in
13 *secret.* [There is] a generation, O how lofty are their eyes!
and their eyelids are lifted up; *their pride discovers itself in their*

* Who this Agur was it is impossible to say. Some ancient versions do not read it as a proper name, and suppose the chapter to be part of Solomon's writings; others suppose he was a person of eminent wisdom and piety, who lived in Hezekiah's time, and that these were his instructions to his pupils, or answers to some questions that they proposed to him.

countenance, and they disdain to look on their inferiors; do not
14 *learn their haughty, senseless manners.* [There is] a generation,
whose teeth [are as] swords, and their jaw teeth [as] knives, to
devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from [among]
men; *tyrannical, arbitrary people, who oppress and grind the*
poor; have no connection with such men as these. The next
question is, What is most insatiable?
15 The horseleach hath two daughters, *a forked tongue, which*
greedily seeketh blood, [crying,] Give, give. There are three
[things that] are never satisfied, [yea,] four [things] say not,
16 [It is] enough; *are as insatiable:* The grave, *that swallows every*
succeeding generation; and the barren womb, *that is eagerly de-*
sirous of children; the earth, *particularly in hot countries,* [that]
is not filled with water; and the fire [that] saith not, [It is]
enough, *but devours all that is thrown into it. He then adds the*
doom of the disobedient children mentioned in the eleventh verse.
17 The eye [that] mocketh at [his] father *for his infirmities,*
and despiseth to obey [his] mother, the ravens of the valley
shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it; *his body shall*
be exposed as a malefactor, or he shall die in some desolate place;
the vengeance of God shall find him abroad, though the tenderness of
his abused parents may spare him at home.

To the next question, What is most obscure and unaccountable?
18 *he answers,* There be three [things which] are too wonderful for
19 me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the
air, *that flies high and strong;* the way of a serpent upon a rock,
that without feet climbs up rocks; the way of a ship in the midst
of the sea, *that sometimes sinks and sometimes rises, and moves*
very swiftly along; and the way of a man with a maid, *the arti-*
20 *fices of a man to gain the woman he is courting.* Such [is] the
way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth,
and saith, I have done no wickedness: *this is a modest way of*
expressing a detestable action; she puts on an artful appearance,
behaves outwardly like an honest woman and a kind wife. We
have then an answer to the question, What things are most intoler-
21 *able?* For three [things] the earth is disquieted, and for four
22 [which] it cannot bear: For a servant when he reigneth, *when*
he gets into power and authority; and a fool when he is filled with
23 meat, *a petulent, rude fellow when he is drunk;* For an odious
[woman,] *that is, a cross, ill tempered woman,* when she is mar-
ried, *a happiness too great for her to expect, and yet which only*
shows her ill temper the more; and an handmaid that is heir to
her mistress, *to whom her mistress leaves her estate, or who hath*
supplanted her mistress and married her master.

In answer to the query, What things are small and contemptible
24 *in themselves, and yet wise, he replies,* There be four [things
which are] little upon the earth, but they [are] exceeding wise:
25 The ants [are] a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat
in the summer, *and thus teach us to prepare against a time of ad-*
26 *versity;* The conies, *or Arabian mice,* [are but] a feeble folk, yet

make they their houses in the rocks, *and thus teach us caution in*
27 *avoiding those dangers we cannot resist;* The locusts have no
king, yet go they forth all of them by bands, *and their numbers*
make them terrible, which should teach us union in prosecuting good
28 *designs;* The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's
palaces; *and by indefatigable diligence repairs her web; which*
should teach us perseverance, and not to be discouraged. The
question then is, What things are most stately and majestic?
29 There be three [things] which go well, yea, four are comely
30 in going: A lion [which is] strongest among beasts, and turn-
31 eth not away for any; A greyhound, *or horse prepared for the*
battle; an he goat also; and a king, against whom [there is]
no rising up, *a king that reigns in the hearts of his people, this*
gives him a consciousness which adds dignity to his appearance.
Having thus advised his pupils to be innocent and pious in order to
be happy, he adds the two last verses, upon a supposition that they
should say or do any foolish things.
32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast
thought evil, [lay] thine hand upon thy mouth; *humbly acknow-*
ledge that thou hast done wrong, and make a proper apology, rather
than, from an insolent temper, defend what is wrong because thou
33 *hast done it.* Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter,
and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forc-
ing of wrath bringeth forth strife; *the one is not more natural*
than the other. He that would live peaceably and happily, and be
esteemed among men, should behave himself with modesty and hu-
mility; for he that lifteth up himself, though he may think himself
a wise man, does very foolishly, and all about him will despise him.

CHAP. XXXI.

1 THE words of king Lemuel,* the prophecy that his mother
2 taught him. What, my son? and what, the son of my
womb? and what, the son of my vows? *An abrupt and beautiful*
form of speech; as if she had said, What instruction shall I give
thee, how shall I express my love to thee, thou son of my womb,
thou son of my vows, whom I have prayed for, and devoted to God
3 *before thou wast born?* Give not thy strength unto women, nor
thy ways to that which destroyeth kings; *do not waste the vigour*
of your years in effeminate, sinful pleasures, like other eastern
princes; by which their constitutions are broken, and their reigns
dishonoured. Happy had it been for him had he taken this advice.
4 [It is] not for kings, O Lemuel, [it is] not for kings to drink
wine; nor for princes strong drink, *that is, immoderately; which*
5 *would not only injure themselves, but their subjects.* Lest they

* I take it for granted, with the generality of commentators, that Lemuel is Solomon, a name which signifies one belonging to God; it is nearly of the same import with Jedediah. These are the divine lessons his mother Bathsheba taught him to commit to memory.

drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts; *when persons are in deep distress, they need, and can bear cordials to support their spirits.*
7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery
8 no more. Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction; *who are in danger of suffering*
9 *considerable damage either in body, credit, or estate.* Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy; *pronounce a bold and just sentence.*
10 Who can find a virtuous woman, *prudent, good natured, and religious:* for her price [is] far above rubies; *above all things advising him to take heed in the choice of a wife; or rather, it may*
11 *refer to the character of a good wife in general.* The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, *in her chastity, prudence, and fidelity; he has no jealousy, nor uneasy apprehensions;* so that he shall have no need of spoil; *he shall have no need of spoiling others to enrich himself, and no fear of being plundered, as some*
12 *are by their wives.* She shall do him good and not evil all the days of her life; *she will take the greatest care to engage and keep his affections, study to oblige and please him; and this, not*
13 *only in sudden fits of good humour, but all her days.* She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; *she provides employment for her servants, and sets them a good example.*
14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from
15 afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, *before break of day,* and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens; *she giveth food to those that go abroad to work, and to her maidens*
16 *at home: she rises early to attend to her domestic cares.* She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard; *by the commodities spun and woven in*
17 *the family, she buys land and plants vineyards.* She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms; *she does not make little difficulties an excuse for indolence, but acts resolutely.*
18 She perceiveth that her merchandize [is] good: her candle goeth not out by night; *she takes as much of the night as can*
19 *conveniently be spared from necessary sleep.* She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. *Ladies of the highest quality in the east were thus employed, as we find from many passages in Homer, and other heathen writers; and a much*
20 *better employment it was than most modern ones.* She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy; *she is not such a housewife as to lay up every thing,*
21 *but relieves the poor.* She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household [are] clothed with scarlet, *or double*
22 *garments.* She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing [is] silk and purple; *the more glorious because her own work.*
23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land, *who congratulate him upon his happiness in hav-*

ing so prudent a wife ; and her wise conversation increaseth his
24 *wisdom, and makes him more fit to advise others.* She maketh
fine linen, and selleth [it ;] and delivereth girdles unto the mer-
25 chant. Strength and honour [are] her clothing ; *she has a great deal of courage and resolution, and laughs at those difficulties by which others are discouraged ;* and she shall rejoice in time to
26 come ; *maintain a cheerful spirit even in old age and death.* She openeth her mouth with wisdom : and in her tongue [is] the law of kindness ; *she discourses prudently and judiciously on the most serious and important subjects ; avoids a pettish way of speaking ; there is kindness, softness, and tenderness in every thing she says, which is obliging, like a law ; one of the most essential quali-*
27 *fications of a good wife.* She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness ; *she examines the conduct of her servants, and how they perform their duty : she neither suffers them to gad abroad, or to be idle at home ; she sees that her children be well educated and behave themselves aright, and sets them all an example of diligence : and in consequence of*
28 *this,* Her children arise up, and call her blessed ; her husband
[also,] and he praiseth her : *they set themselves to commend her,*
29 *and say,* Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou *surely*
30 excellest them all. Favour [is] deceitful, and beauty [is] vain ; *a graceful behaviour and beautiful features are trifling in themselves, have often covered some ill qualities, and quickly decay ;* [but] a woman [that] feareth the LORD, she shall be praised ; *she will receive sincere and warm commendations from all that*
31 *knew her.* Give her of the fruit of her hands ; and let her own works praise her in the gates ; *while others have the praise of nobility, fortune, or beauty, she will be commended in the most numerous assemblies, for qualities and endowments infinitely more excellent and useful. Upon the whole, this is a most amiable description : it shows the women what wives they should be, and the men what wives they should choose. We have reason to lament that the general method of female education, and the manners of so many women are so contrary to this description ; and that there is so little domestic virtue in many modern wives. Those whom Providence has favoured with wives that answer to this description in the most important branches of it, can never be sufficiently thankful.*

ECCLESIASTES,

Or, The PREACHER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE design of this book is to show men wherein true happiness consists, and to guard them against seeking it in those things in which it is not to be found: it is generally supposed to have been written by Solomon *in his old age. Some parts of it are rather obscure; and it is difficult to enter into his reasoning, though his general scheme and practical design are very apparent.*

CHAP. I.

1 THE words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Je-
2 rusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all [is] vanity, *that is, all that relates only to this life. This is the text of his sermon, and the issue of his large inquiry; it is absolutely vain; he could not express it more emphatically than by saying, it is vainer than vanity itself; utterly insufficient*
3 *to procure solid satisfaction and durable happiness.* What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? *he can find very little true satisfaction in all his pains about earthly things; and none at all considered in themselves. He argues this from the shortness of human life in general, which he illustrates by the continual changes which we behold in the natural world.*
4 [One] generation passeth away, and [another] generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever, *or, as some would render it, for*
5 *an uncertain indeterminate time.* The sun also ariseth, and the
6 sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again ac-
7 cording to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea [is] not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again; *and thus do the generations of men revolve with very little variety, and never rest in a settled condition, but gradually wear away and vanish. But though life*
8 *should be long there would be little satisfaction in it, for* All things [are] full of labour; man cannot utter [it,] *cannot sufficiently express how tedious life is:* the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing; *man's desires are boundless, still seeking after new objects, and yet not heartily acquiescing in any.*

Nor is any thing better to be expected from new discoveries, since
9 The thing that hath been, it [is that] which shall be; and that
which is done [is] that which shall be done: and [there is]
10 no new [thing] under the sun. Is there [any] thing whereof
it may be said, See, this [is] new? it hath been already of old
time, which was before us. *This is not an universal proposition;*
nevertheless many of the things we value ourselves upon as new
discoveries, were known to former ages; and men's labours and
enjoyments are the same in general now as formerly. No new ex-
pedient can be found out to secure the happiness of mankind in earth-
11 *ly things.* [There is] no remembrance of former [things;]
neither shall there be [any] remembrance of [things] that are
to come with [those] that shall come after; *the names and me-*
mories of the inventors of many things are lost, so will the names
and memory of their successors: their inventions did not answer
their expectation, they still complained of vanity, and so shall we.
In the rest of the chapter the preacher shows the vanity of human
wisdom and learning, and its insufficiency to make men happy;
12 *though it bids fairest for it of all natural things.* I the Preacher
was king over Israel in Jerusalem; *I was in circumstances*
which gave me every advantage for pursuing knowledge:
13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom con-
cerning all [things] that are done under heaven: this sore
travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised there-
with; *he must search for knowledge with great labour, and ob-*
14 *tain it by slow degrees.* I have seen all the works *of this kind*
that are done under the sun; and, behold, all [is] vanity and vex-
ation of spirit; *we know little, and that little is not of much service*
15 *to us.* [That which is] crooked cannot be made straight: and
that which is wanting cannot be numbered; *there are many*
things uneasy and disagreeable in life, which all the wit and wisdom
16 *of men cannot fully rectify.* I communed with mine own heart,
saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more
wisdom than all [they] that have been before me in Jerusalem:
yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowl-
edge; *the distinguished circumstances in which God hath placed*
me, gave me greater advantages for searching into wisdom than
17 *others.* And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know
madness and folly; *I applied my mind closely to search into the*
nature and reason of things, the causes and effects of men's follies
and vices; and here likewise I found disappointment, I perceived
18 that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom, *or*
speculative knowledge, [is] much grief; *there is a great deal of*
trouble in getting, pursuing, and keeping it: and he that in-
creaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow: *the more he knows, th*
clearer views he has of the vanity of human life; and the mor
vexation he will find, unless his knowledge be improved to religious
purposes. Beside attending to the general purport and design of
this book, there are particular passages that may afford us some
useful instructions.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see, that it is no dishonour to the wisest and best of men to be preachers, but much to their glory; for Solomon, so renowned for wisdom, wealth, and dignity, assumes this character. This should teach us, that it is every man's duty to employ what talents God gives him, for the instruction and reformation of the world; and that those especially to whom God has given peculiar wisdom, should communicate it to others for their edification. If they have rank, wealth, and influence, these may help to recommend their instructions, and add weight to all the advice they give.

2. The abilities and circumstances of Solomon should engage our peculiar attention to what he says, especially about the vanity of the world. He was the wisest, the richest, and the greatest of men; of all men that ever lived, he had the greatest advantage for making the experiment; the result of which, he in this book informs us. It was the issue of a deliberate judgment, founded upon close inquiry and large experience, and therefore worthy of our highest regard.

3. Let us endeavour to impress our hearts with the changeable nature of all earthly things. This is Solomon's first and strongest proof of their vanity. All nature is in continual fluctuation. Generation after generation passeth off; men are engaged in the same pursuits as their ancestors; the same follies are acted over and over again. Old arts are recovered; old fashions restored; the disorders, corruptions, and complaints of every age are much the same. Let this therefore abate our pride in our own discoveries and attainments; restrain the folly of despising former ages; and teach us particularly, that what is so changeable can never afford substantial happiness to an immortal spirit.

4. The vanity of speculative knowledge should teach us to pursue that which is practical, useful, and satisfactory. Solomon's design is not to discourage us from pursuing knowledge. It has its difficulties, arising in a great measure from our wrong choice; but it has its pleasures too. Those whose business in life it is to increase in speculative knowledge, as subservient to something better, feel the truth of Solomon's observation, *v.* 18. *in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow:* but never more sensibly, than when they meet with ill returns from those for whose service they pursue it; and with the best returns they find little satisfactory in it. May we all therefore, those of us especially who have little time for reading and study, apply our minds chiefly to that which *will make us wise to salvation.* He that increaseth in the knowledge of God and divine things, will increase in joy; and find in the end that *this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.*

CHAP. II.

In this chapter are further experiments, how far happiness is to be found in earthly things.

1 I SAID in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with
mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure ; *come on, indulge all lawful*
delights, and try every agreeable scene : and, behold, this also
2 [is] vanity. I said of laughter, [It is] mad ; *it transports men*
beyond the bounds of reason, prudence, and sobriety : and of mirth,
3 What doeth it ? *it is soon over, and leaves a man unsatisfied.* I
sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting
mine heart with wisdom ; and to lay hold on folly, till I might
see what [was] that good for the sons of men, which they should
do under the heaven all the days of their life ; *I sought for happiness in entertainments and banquets, yet kept myself within the*
bounds of sobriety ; but here I met with so much disappointment,
4 *that I hate to dwell any longer upon the mention of it.* I made
me great works ; I builded me houses ; I planted me vine-
5 yards : I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees
6 in them of all [kind of] fruits : I made me pools of water,
7 to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees : I got
[me] servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house,
whom I could educate as I pleased ; also I had great possessions
of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before
8 me : I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar trea-
sure of kings and of the provinces : I gat me men singers and
women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, [as] mu-
sical instruments, and that of all sorts ; *I in a manner drained*
the kingdoms and provinces subject to me of all their curiosities.
9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me
in Jerusalem : also my wisdom remained with me ; *my genius*
enabled me to carry these things to greater perfection, than a
person of equal substance but not equal abilities could have done.
10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I
withheld not my heart from any joy ; for my heart rejoiced
in all my labour : and this was my portion of all my labour ;
It is true I found entertainment in these things ; the forming of
plans, and seeing their rising beauties, gave me some pleasure ; but
this was all my portion, the pleasure ceased with the novelty, and
11 *I quickly wanted some fresh object.* Then I looked on all the
works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had
laboured to do : and, behold, all [was] vanity and vexation of
spirit, and [there was] no profit under the sun.
12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and
folly ; *I returned to the examination of wisdom and its opposites,*
particularly as applied to worldly business ; and no man can try
the experiment more fully than I have done ; for what [can] the
man [do] that cometh after the king ? [even] that which hath
13 been already done. Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as

far as light excelleth darkness: *the result was, that a discreet, prudent, regular conduct for this world has greatly the advantage*
14 *of its contrary.* The wise man's eyes [are] in his head, *where they best serve him to look about him, to see his danger, and guide his way;* but the fool walketh in darkness; *rash, imprudent men blunder on into mischief and vexation:* and I myself per-
15 ceived also, that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth unto the fool, so it happeneth even to me; *we are subject to the same painful events;* and why was I then [more] wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also
16 [is] vanity. For [there is] no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now [is] in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise [man?] as the fool. *The wise die as well as fools, and each are quickly forgotten: he must be a person of extraordinary character*
17 *that is talked of for ages.* Therefore *so far from finding satisfaction,* I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun [is] grievous unto me: for all [is] vanity and vexation of spirit.

18 Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be af-
19 ter me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise [man] or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This [is] also vanity. *Rehoboam, who was forty years old when his father died, so that he must have seen his weakness*
20 *and folly, is doubtless here referred to.* Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun; *instead of pursuing former schemes, I gave them up, as one utterly tired with them; nor is this peculiar to me, it is often*
21 *seen in lower circumstances.* For there is a man whose labour [is] in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein, *to a man whose character is just the reverse of his own,* shall he leave it [for] his portion. This
22 also [is] vanity and a great evil. For what hath man, *such a man as above described,* of all his labour, and of the vexation of
23 his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days, *or, although all his days,* [are] sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night; *though he hath obtained what he has with so much care, labour and fatigue, yet it must be left to he knows not who.* This is also vanity.

24 [There is] nothing better for a man, [than] that he should eat and drink, and [that] he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it [was] from the hand of God: *the best way therefore, is not to engage in many schemes, and perplex himself with much business; but contentedly to sit down and enjoy the good things God has given him with pleasure*
25 *and thankfulness: but this is not in a man's own power;* For who can eat, or who else can hasten [hereunto,] more than I? *or, as it may be better rendered, 'who can eat or hasten thereunto*

without him? *This depends on the divine blessing, and the turn he gives to the mind, though the materials may be in a man's own*
26 *possession.* For [God] giveth to a man that [is] good in his sight, *that is, to a pious man,* wisdom and knowledge *to make a good use of his substance,* and joy *in the using of it:* but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to [him that is] good before God; *he gives up the wicked to an insatiable discontented spirit, so that they afflict themselves with many cares and sorrows, to heap up what in the course of his providence he often gives to the righteous.* This also [is] vanity and vexation of spirit.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the vanity of expecting happiness in mirth and pleasure, grandeur and luxury. In spite of all Solomon's reasoning and experience, the present age is trying the experiment over again; but they will at last join in his conclusion. It is a dangerous experiment; for few can make it and yet their wisdom remain with them. Therefore it is better to desist and take Solomon's word. Remember that these things cannot quiet a guilty conscience, comfort a drooping spirit, ease a dying body, or save an immortal soul.

2. There are many things which are excellent in themselves, and of great use in life, that will not make a man happy. Prudence, diligence, and regularity in business, are things highly commendable, and favourable to men's worldly interest, therefore many place all their religion in them; but they are not *the one thing needful.* Let us be careful that we are not mistaken; and while we study the arts of prudence and economy, *forget the weightier matters of the law,* and continue destitute of the love of God.

3. We are here taught the importance and necessity of true religion to make a man comfortable even in this world. Men may slave and toil ever so much, gain ever such abundance by sagacity, diligence, and frugality, it will not prolong their lives or their memories; it will not insure them a worthy heir; nor even a comfortable use of their own substance. The cheerful enjoyment of what we have must come from God. It is therefore to be sought by fervent prayer; and is generally given to good men; and this they may have with a little. So that upon the whole, *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

CHAP. III.

Solomon here proceeds to describe the vanity of human wisdom; it is confined to a certain time of acting, which if we miss, our contrivances are vain, and the opportunity over.

1 TO every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every
purpose under the heaven, *out of which no human wisdom*
2 *can produce the events God hath affixed to them:* A time to be
born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up
3 [that which is] planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a
4 time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep,
and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to
7 cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep
8 silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to
hate, *that is, to break off friendship;* a time of war, and a time
9 of peace. What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he
laboureth *out of the proper season, or even in it, since there are so*
10 *many changes?* I have seen the travail which God hath given to
the sons of men to be exercised in it; *minding the business of*
life, observing the proper seasons, and submitting when disap-
pointed.
11 He hath made every [thing] beautiful in his time; *there is*
beauty in this variety: also he hath set the world in their heart,
so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the
beginning to the end; *there is a vast variety of things, as objects*
of their pursuits and studies: and God hath set it in their hearts
to examine all his works, except what is above their understand-
12 *ing.** I know that [there is] no good in them, *that is, in worldly*
things, but for [a man] to rejoice, and to do good in his life;
there is no other satisfaction or felicity which a man can meet with in
worldly enjoyments but to use them with a cheerful temper, and do
13 *good to others with them.* And also that every man should eat
and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, *and lay aside dis-*
tracting fears of future want, it [is] the gift of God, *and should be*
diligently sought and thankfully acknowledged as coming from him.
14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing
can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth
[it,] that [men] should fear before him; *God will not vary from*
his purpose; he has fixed this uncertainty to keep men in a con-
stant dependence, that they may humbly submit, and not murmur at
15 *what they cannot avoid.* That which hath been is now; and
that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that

* Some understand the passage as referring to the influence the world has upon men to make them neglect prudent consideration; others refer it to their continuance in the world; as if he had said, A man that lives so short a time cannot judge of the whole of God's works.

which is past ; *it always has been thus, and always will be ; therefore it is indecent to complain of the settled laws of God's creation ; and as he determines all the events of our lives, he will call us to an account for the conduct of them.*

16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, [that] wickedness [was] there ; and the place of righteousness, [that] iniquity [was] there ; *such is the vanity of power and authority, without religion ; or, as some understand it, so liable are men to refine and oppression, which lessens the value of earthly*
17 *comforts.* I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked : for [there is] a time there for every purpose and for every work ; *this was the comfort I had under this vanity*
18 *and oppression.* I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts ; *O that God would give these proud oppressors to see that they shall die, not only like men, but like beasts ; that their oppression shall last but a little time, and that they shall not long enjoy the consequences of it.*
19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts ; even one thing befalleth them : as the one dieth, so dieth the other ; yea, they have all one breath ; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast, *with regard to the body, or for the avoiding*
20 *of death :* for all [is] vanity. All go unto one place ; all are of
21 the *same* dust, and all turn to *that* dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth ? *Few men, especially great men, consider seriously the difference between the human nature and the brutal, the immortality of the one and the mortality of the other.*
22 Wherefore I perceive that [there is] nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works ; *take the comfort of what God has given him without labouring after honour and preferment ;* for that [is] his portion ; *all the good he can have from them :* for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him ? *who can inform him what will become of them when he is gone ?*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is comfortable among the many changes of life to think, that they are under the direction of an overruling Providence. We live in a world full of changes ; the conditions of men are different, yet continually altering. There are many favourable circumstances in life, which it is our wisdom to observe and improve. Whatever may appear to us as casual or contingent, is determined by Providence ; we must not therefore complain of changes, troubles, and labours, for God has allotted them to us ; they are all beautiful in their season, make upon the whole an admirable scheme of Providence, and are for the good of the world.

2. We also see wherein the true enjoyment of earthly things consists. Not in eagerly pursuing or hoarding them up, but in using them with cheerfulness, and doing good with them. This is the

only good in them. They cannot make us happy themselves; but by a wise, pious, and charitable use of them, they may contribute to it. For these ends they were given us, and to these ends they ought to be employed.

3. The end of God's government and providence, and of the variety of his dispensations, is, that *we may fear before Him*. They were not designed to perplex and disturb us, but to edify us, by keeping alive in our minds a sense of our constant dependence upon God. They ought to direct our thoughts to him, and engage us to pray to him for what we want, to give him thanks for what we receive, and to seek wisdom so to improve them, that they may turn to a good account at last.

4. The iniquity and oppression which there is in the world, especially in magistrates and great men, should confirm our faith in a future judgment, and lead us to Solomon's conclusion, that *God will judge every purpose and every work*. Let us not stumble at these disorders, but *wait for the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God*.

5. How much is it to be lamented that so few consider the immortality of their souls! how they are distinguished from the beasts by a rational spirit, and what becomes of it after death! What pity is it that rational creatures should live like beasts, only to eat, drink, sleep, work, and play. Few live under the power of this truth, that their souls are immortal. Let us then seriously dwell upon the thought, that we may take due care of our immortal spirits, and *lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and finally lay hold on eternal life*.

CHAP. IV.

The preacher here shows that vanity is increased by oppression, envy, idleness, covetousness, solitariness, and wilfulness.

1 SO I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, *from pride, covetousness, revenge, and illnature*: and behold the tears of [such as were] oppressed, and they had no comforter; *they could not help themselves, nor had any to help them*; and on the side of their oppressors [there was] power; but they had no comforter: *and this vex-*
2 *ed my spirit*; Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive; *I thought them in a better condition than those who suffer by oppression, who fear*
3 *it, or even behold it*. Yea, better [is he] than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done
4 under the sun. Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour, *for his prosperity, although he ought rather to esteem him for his integrity and diligence; but there are extremes in this case to be avoided*. This [is] also vanity and vexation of spirit.

5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh; *under a pretence of avoiding envy and oppression, he gives himself up to an idle disposition, till he almost starves, or becomes a prey to his uneasy passions, that do as it were devour him. The other extreme is excessive anxiety, for*

6 Better [is] an handful [with] quietness, than both the hands full [with] travail and vexation of spirit; *a little with a contented mind and a comfortable enjoyment of it, is better than ever so much with uneasiness and discontent.*

7 Then I returned, and saw vanity under the sun, *in the wretched case of a sordid miser, which shows the vanity of the world, and*
8 *that the love of wealth grows upon men.* There is one [alone,] and [there is] not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; *no body to care for but himself, no near relation:* yet [is there] no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither [saith he,] For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This [is] also vanity, yea, it [is] a sore travail; *a wicked disposition and a miserable state.*

On the other hand, consider the benefits of friendship and society, of which covetousness in a great measure deprives men; but
9 *which would tend to cure that sordid disposition.* Two [are] better than one; because they have a good reward for their la-
10 bour. For, if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but wo to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not an-
11 other to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they
12 have heat: but how can one be warm [alone?] And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a three fold cord is not quickly broken; *near relations and friends may be assistants in danger, helps in labour, and mutual comforts to each other in various circumstances of life, and especially in adversity.*

But society alone cannot make a man happy. Who have more
13 *about them than kings? yet they are not always happy.* Better, *that is, more happy,* [is] a poor and a wise child, than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished, *whose dignity*
14 *and age lead him to reject good counsel.* For out of prison he, *the poor wise child,* cometh to reign; *though confined for debt, or in low circumstances, he is speedily advanced; his wisdom bears him above his misfortunes, and fixes him in a considerable station;* whereas also [he that is] born in his kingdom becometh poor; *for want of prudent management, he that is born to a large estate, and is, as we say, a little prince, is impoverished and despised. Another proof of the vanity of the world is, that even wise kings*
15 *lose the esteem of their subjects.* I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead. *This would be better rendered, 'I have seen all the living under the sun going with the child that is second,' that is, the heir*
16 *apparent to the crown.* [There is] no end of all the people, [even] of all that have been before them; *the number of all the people, even of all that have been before him, is without end:* they also that come after shall not rejoice in him; *though vast*

crouds attend his levees, the time will come when this young man shall see himself neglected, as his father was. Surely this also [is] vanity and vexation of spirit: *therefore happiness is not to be found in royal pomp, grandeur, and attendants. Solomon might speak this feelingly: it must have been very mortifying to see his courtiers leaving him, and crouding after such a fool as Rehoboam was.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE many oppressions which are in the world, are very distressing to a pious, compassionate heart. Let us bless God that we are not under public oppression by tyrannical princes and cruel judges; though there is a great deal in private life: many servants and workmen are oppressed by cruel masters, and tenants by their landlords. There are few to pity them, and fewer still to redress them. Let us lament such scenes, and carefully avoid such a detestable character; and appear as far as we can, the comforters of those that are oppressed.

2. How malevolent and wretched is that spirit which leads men to envy those who prosper more than themselves! When honest men take pains, deal honourably, and meet with success, their neighbours, especially their brother tradesmen, and some who are in plentiful circumstances too, will envy them, misrepresent them, injure them by false suggestions, vile insinuations and endeavours to lessen their reputation and undermine their interests. This is a most wicked disposition, and yet very common. A man of true charity and christian love is glad to see his neighbour thrive, and takes pleasure in his prosperity.

3. We see of what an insinuating, growing nature, the love of money is, which should make us careful to guard against it. One would scarcely believe, if one had not seen it, that there are persons in plentiful circumstances, who have no near relations dependent upon them, yet are continually slaving; are not content with their own business, but keep pushing into that of any others where there is profit; who have no other pleasure but that of seeing their money, and thinking how much they are worth. They have no excuse for this avarice, and have no good from it. May we therefore beware of the love of money, which increaseth dreadfully in the heart which indulges it; and remember that labouring incessantly to hoard up wealth, is robbing the soul of good at present, and drowning it in future perdition.

4. The benefit and comfort of society should lead us to cultivate social and kind affections. There are noble helps and comforts from it in almost every circumstance of life. Let us then labour to gain and keep friends; and in order to this *show ourselves friendly.* This temper should be carried with us into religion; there we shall find the benefit of pious friendship and religious associations; and *by strengthening one another's hands in God* and *provoking one another to love and to good works*, we shall have great assist-

ance in the attack of spiritual enemies; and the body of Christ will be edified, while the members are knit together in love.

5. We learn, that to be unwilling to be admonished, is one of the worst and most contemptible of characters. A wise child, an humble, teachable person, is much more worthy and honourable than a conceited obstinate old king, with all the dignity that his crown and age could give him. This is often the case of the rich and great; it is often the case of the aged; they think themselves above admonition, especially if those who give it are poorer or younger than themselves. Those who need admonition most, bear it worst. But let us show that we are wise (at least not incorrigible fools) by receiving admonition calmly and thankfully, and setting ourselves to correct our errors, and go on to perfection.

CHAP. V.

Solomon having described the vanity of the world in many instances, and hinted that religion was the only antidote against it, here proceeds to caution against those errors in religion into which men are ready to fall; and then returns to the vanity of power and wealth.

1 KEEP thy foot when thou goest to the house of God; *consider what thou art going about, and behave in the most reverent manner; do not run hastily and rashly into the divine presence*;* and be more ready to hear, *to be instructed in his will, and to obey it*, than to give the sacrifice of fools, *such sacrifices as wicked men frequently offer:* for they consider not that they do evil; *they do not consider that while they go on in wicked courses, or worship in an indecent manner, they are adding to their guilt.*

2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter [any] thing before God *by way of prayer or vow:* for God [is] in heaven, and thou upon earth, *he is highly exalted above thee:* therefore let thy words be few, *that is, well considered.*

3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice [is known] by multitude of words; *as a multitude of business occasions confused dreams, so in multitudes of words men are led to say vain and foolish things before they are aware.*

4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for [he hath] no pleasure in fools; *he is highly displeased with them:* pay that which thou hast vowed, *for God is not to be jested with.*

5 Better [is it] that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay; *the one being only a neglect, the other a direct*

6 *contempt of the divine majesty.* Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; *do not entangle thyself with a needless vow, which the frailty of human nature may lead thee to break*;† nei-

* Here is an allusion to the eastern custom of putting off the shoe in token of reverence; as putting off the hat, and uncovering the head is among us.

† Absolute vows against marriage, certain food, or recreations, are to be avoided; for by breaking the vow those things may become sinful which in their own nature are indifferent.

ther say thou before the angel, *to the priest, when thou bringest a sacrifice, or the angels that are present at divine worship*, that it [was] an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? *This is offensive to God,*
7 *and tends to bring a curse on what thou doest.* For in the multitude of dreams and many words [there are] also [divers] vanities; *many words uttered in a solemn manner without due consideration, as vows or prayers, are as vain as dreams:* but fear thou God; *reverence his presence and majesty, and do not offend him by thy rashness.*

8 If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for [he that is] higher than the highest regardeth; and [there be] higher than they; *there is one higher than the oppressors, who will punish them for it.*

9 Moreover the profit of the earth is for all; *another reason against covetousness; the necessaries of life are easily obtained; vegetable nature supplies the whole animal world, and all men,*
10 *even the greatest, yea,* the king [himself] is served by the field. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; *he will never think he has enough;* nor he that loveth abundance with
11 increase: this [is] also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them; *there is a larger family and retinue, and therefore more expense; and others enjoy his wealth as much as he:* and what good [is there] to the owners thereof, saving
12 the beholding [of them] with their eyes. The sleep of a labouring man [is] sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep; *it brings cares which counterbalance the satisfaction it affords, and which*
13 *often prevent his repose.* There is a sore evil [which] I have seen under the sun, [namely,] riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt; *the rich are sometimes marked out as objects of oppression and ruin in arbitrary countries, and anxiety often de-*
14 *stroys their health, their peace, and their souls.* But those riches perish by evil travail, *by extravagance and imprudence:* and he begetteth a son, and [there is] nothing in his hand; *he leaves his family impoverished, which is so much the worse, as his son was educated with the hope of a fortune, so that he is reduced to pecu-*
15 *liar calamity.* As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand; *if no other acci-*
dent deprives him of his wealth, yet death will strip him of all.
16 And this also [is] a sore evil, [that] in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the
17 wind? *who hath taken abundance of pains for that which he can no more hold than he can the wind?* All his days also he eateth in darkness, *either does not allow himself the conveniences of life, or is disturbed by irregular passions, so that he has no comfort in his enjoyments;* and [he hath] much sorrow and wrath with his sickness; *sickness and confinement are peculiarly grievous to him,*

because they take him off from his favourite pursuits, and are likely to end in death, when he must leave all his possessions behind him.

18 Behold [that] which I have seen: [it is] good and comely [for one] to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it [is] his portion, *all that falls to his share*

19 *of the enjoyments and possessions of life.* Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this [is] the gift of God; *it ought to be acknowledged as*

20 *a singular fruit of his bounty.* For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth [him] in the joy of his heart; *he shall not think life tedious and long, nor be too much concerned at the evils that befall him, because God gives him inward tranquillity, the pleasures of religion, communion with himself, and the hope of a glorious immortality; these amply compensate all his trouble and sorrow.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE have need to be extremely cautious that our religious services be not vain and sinful. There is much excellent advice on this head in the former part of the chapter, that should be seriously recollected every sabbath. We should enter upon divine worship with a solemn pause, with great composure of spirit, and all external marks of reverence. Sensible of the infinite distance between God and us, let us attend to the words we utter, and join heartily in those which are uttered in our name. Our prayers in general ought to be short, because (if they be long) it is next to impossible to keep up a due attention and fervent affection. Let us also remember the caution here given about our vows. As christians, we ought to recollect and pay them. It were a sad thing that our worship should be vain; that we should be doing evil when we think we are doing good. To imagine that God will connive at our sins, because we pay him solemn worship, is a high affront and indignity. By such services men are contracting new guilt, instead of atoning for past.

2. We see of what admirable use the fear of God is. A sense of his presense and providence, and a reverence for his majesty and authority, will prevent our being disturbed by our own or others' dreams; it will also prevent our being astonished or dejected at the oppression, violence, or injustice that are in the earth. For we shall be sensible that God sees it all, and will reckon for it in the day of the revelation of his righteous judgment. May we then *sanctify the Lord of hosts in our hearts, and make him our fear and our dread.*

3. The frequent views which Solomon gives us of the vanity of riches, should engage us all to seek a better, even an enduring substance. We see Solomon's observations on the vanity, uncertainty,

and troubles attending wealth daily verified. But religion is a substantial good; it satisfies the soul; contributes to the usefulness of the day, and the repose of the night: it assuredly brings true prosperity to those that possess it; and furnishes them with peace and comfort even in sickness and death. They do not regret to leave the world, as their treasure is laid up in heaven. On the whole, religion makes wealth a blessing, or turns poverty into an honourable and happy state; as it gives that joy of heart which the greatest abundance of the world can never give.

CHAP. VI.

Solomon proceeds to show the vanity of wealth and the evil of sordid covetousness. He had mentioned a heart to use what we have as a great blessing, he here observes, that it is not always to be found, and that without it a man is miserable in his greatest abundance.

1 THERE is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and
2 it [is] common among men: A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it; *he is a mere slave to his money, and lays up for he knows not who:* this [is] vanity,
3 and it [is] an evil disease. If a man beget an hundred [children,] and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also [that] he have no burial; *if a man have many children of his own, which among the Jews was reckoned a singular favour, yet grudges himself the comforts of life; or if he make no provision for his decent funeral, or his heir have such a contempt for him that he will not allow him such a funeral,* I say, [that] an untimely, *that is, an*
4 *abortive* birth [is] better than he. For he, *that is, the abortive child,* cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his
5 name shall be covered with darkness. Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known [any thing:] this hath more rest than the other; *as he hath never enjoyed the pleasures, he hath never felt the calamities of life, so that he who hath deprived himself of its comforts, and plunged himself into its sorrows, is the greater sufferer.*
6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice [told,] yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place? *in a little time both of them shall be upon a level.*

7 All the labour of man [is] for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled; *the desires of the body are soon satisfied, but the*
8 *craving of a distempered heart never is.* For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? *The wise man who knoweth how to govern his fancy, and a poor man who knoweth how to behave suitable to his condition, and restrains unreasonable desires, is more honourable*

and happy than wealthy misers: or if it be taken as a question, the
9 *answer follows;* Better [is] the sight of the eyes, than the wandering of the desire: this [is] also vanity and vexation of spirit; *it is better that a man should take up with that which is before him, that is, what he can see and comfortably enjoy, than suffer his desires to wander, and plunge himself into that vanity and sorrow, which insatiable desires tend to produce: this is the advantage of the wise man above the fool.*

10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it [is] man; *whatever his condition be, however honourable, he is but a man, (referring to the name of Adam, which signifies earth,) a lump of clay, subject to many accidents, and many painful events, which he cannot prevent or remove:* neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he, *that is, almighty God, with whom none can contend with success; he hath subjected the whole human race to vanity, and it is found in every circumstance of life, though not equally in all. The conclusion of this part of my*
11 *subject therefore is,* Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what [is] man the better *for all his wealth and honour, all*
12 *his labours and anxieties?* For who knoweth what [is] good for man in [this] life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun? *Whatever his circumstances are, he must not dream of any enjoyment in mortal life that shall be free from a mixture of vanity, since it appears in so many shapes, that we hardly know what is best for us; especially considering the uncertainty of events that may arise during our lives and after our deaths.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. CONSIDERING how differently earthly things are distributed by Providence, we may be sure that they are not the best things. God often gives wealth and honour, and children to the wicked; to those who have no wisdom or grace to improve them; which is a plain proof that he does not esteem them as his choicest favours: therefore let us not seek them inordinately; nor value ourselves too much upon them. Let us be content and thankful without them: especially if we have been taught to seek better blessings, and hope for substantial, everlasting good.

2. Whatever differences and distinctions there are among men, *they all go to one place.* The rich and the poor, the aged and the young, the wise and the foolish, go alike to the grave, the land of silence and darkness. We are all but men of the earth, and must quickly return thither again; let this thought check the risings of pride, envy, and detraction; and promote candour, meekness, and love.

3. How kind is God in giving us the necessaries of life so easily, and in punishing our inordinate passions with disappointment. To be contented with what nature requires, and restrain inordinate desires, is a most important branch of wisdom. God has consulted

our comfort in giving us necessary provisions for the body; but if we will suffer desire to wander, it will bring home nothing but vexation and torment. Let the poor be diligent, frugal, and contented; they will then be better esteemed, and live more comfortably, than those who are always coveting and never satisfied.

4. Since *man knoweth not what is good for himself*, let us rejoice in the overruling providence of God. We can see but a little way before us; often choose and pursue what we cannot obtain; or, if we obtain it, what only increaseth vanity, and multiplies cares and sorrows. We are apt to think that good for us which we see others eagerly pursuing, or what suits our senses, and therefore has the appearance of good, but we are commonly deceived. We know not the events that are before us; therefore this should prevent our being anxious about our projects, eager in our pursuits, or sanguine in our expectations. Let us bless God for the views which his word gives us of a particular providence, and its assurances that all his creatures are under his immediate government and direction. Though we know not what is good for us, he does, and will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly. Let us therefore take the surest, shortest course to be easy and happy; namely, *to be anxious about nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make known our requests unto God.*

CHAP. VII.

Solomon proceeds to give positive advices about happiness, and how it is to be obtained; and recommends a care to get and keep a good name.

1 A GOOD name [is] better than precious ointment; *it gives a man greater comfort and refreshment while living, than the most agreeable perfumes, and preserves him when dead, better than the most precious embalming*; and the day of death than the day of one's birth, *as death is the end of his trouble and the commencement of his felicity, and seals up his good character.*

2 [It is] better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that [is] the end of all men; and the living will lay [it] to his heart; *the contemplation of death is more desirable and useful than any of the enjoyments of life; it may be expected that active, lively persons should in those circum-*

3 *stances be impressed.* Sorrow, *a composed, serious spirit*, [is] better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better; *affliction is helpful to every grace; it fills the heart with humanity and compassion, and gives a sense of the uncertainty and vanity of human life; by this means it is more weaned from the world and quickened to embrace true happiness.*

4 The heart of the wise [is] in the house of mourning, *and chooses to indulge serious thoughts*; but the heart of fools [is] in the

house of mirth; *loves merry meetings, the assembly room, and*
5 *the play house.* [It is] better to hear the rebuke of the wise,
the sharpest reproof, than for a man to hear the song of fools,
6 *than music or flattery.* For as the crackling of thorns under a
pot, *which makes a great noise, looks cheerful, but is quickly gone,*
so [is] the laughter of the fool: this also [is] vanity. *Another*
method to be happy is to command our passions when we have re-
7 *ceived injury.* Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad;
and a gift destroyeth the heart; *it is very painful to be oppress-*
ed in judgment, especially when there is reason to believe that the
judge hath been bribed; it transports a man to unusual rage, and
puts him upon some irregular conduct: this is a reason for pa-
8 *tience, for* Better [is] the end of a thing than the beginning
thereof: [and] the patient in spirit [is] better than the proud
in spirit; *if men would wait the progress of an affair, they would*
see it mend as it goes on; but he that is hasty and impatient often
9 *undoes himself by his ungoverned temper.* Be not hasty in thy
spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools; *it*
makes a visit sometimes to a wise man, but he soon dismisses the
guest, he is not easily provoked, nor long angry; but fools retain
it, turn it into a bosom friend, and act as passion directs. Another
10 *way to happiness is to correct a complaining temper.* Say not
thou, What is [the cause] that the former days were better
than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this;
we do not know that they were better; there have been good and
bad in all ages. We read much of the best, and little of the worst;
God has wise reasons for the present state of things; there is no
age so bad but we may be good in it, and those that are most free
in their complaints, may be sure that there are some persons not so
good as they should be, that is, themselves, or else they would not
11 *complain.* Wisdom [is] good with an inheritance: and [by it
there is] profit to them that see the sun; *otherwise a rich man*
12 *is only more ridiculous, wicked, and mischievous.* For wisdom
[is] a defence, [and] money [is] a defence; *both are useful in*
their place: but the excellency of knowledge [is, that] wisdom
giveth life to them that have it; *religious knowledge supports*
under the troubles of life, gives present peace, and secures everlast-
ing felicity. Another way to happiness is to accommodate ourselves
13 *to the different conduct of Providence.* Consider the work of
God: for who can make [that] straight, which he hath made
crooked? *God will proceed in his own way, and we cannot alter*
14 *his purpose.* In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day
of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against
the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.
God hath so chequered human life, that we cannot from the present
prognosticate what will be hereafter, or find any thing upon the
15 *whole to complain of, or order for the better.* All [things] have I
seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just [man] that per-
isheth in his righteousness, *or rather, notwithstanding his righte-*
ousness, yea, upon account of it; and there is a wicked [man]

that prolongeth [his life] in his wickedness; *a wicked man some-*
16 *times enjoys great and long prosperity.* Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? *Do not expose yourselves to calumity by imprudence, excessive rigour, or intemperate zeal, which may bring upon*
17 *you contempt and persecution. On the other hand,* Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time? *The greatest danger lies on the other side, of bringing mischief upon yourselves by criminal indulgences, by the hand of a magistrate, or of God. These two verses are similar to our Lord's exhortation,* '*Be wise as serpents and harmless as*
18 *doves.*' [It is] good that thou shouldst take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all: *it is good to take care in both these respects; a truly pious, conscientious man will prudently decline*
19 *dangers, and faithfully perform his duty.* Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty [men] which are in the city, *in particular by leading them to avoid extremes. It is not to be expected it will be so diligently pursued and regarded, as to preserve*
30 *men from all error and misery;* For, *or rather surely,* [there is] not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not, *therefore they have more need of my instructions; and particularly,*
21 Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee; *be not severe in censuring private injuries; if you have a regard to your own peace, do not hearken to tatlers and talebearers, nor be too inquisitive what people say or think of you; else you will meet with vexatious reports from some who are your inferiors, who depend upon you and are obliged to you. To see and not to see, to hear and not to hear, is a secret which will be very useful to a man in his journey through life.*
22 For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others, *who have been equally thy superiors, and treated the reputation of others as unkindly as thy own is treated: learn therefore to make candid allowances, and consider the weakness and depravity of human nature.*
23 All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it [was] far from me; *I found great difficulty in getting wis-*
24 *dom, and did not keep to my own good resolution.* That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? *The compass is so large, and temptations so many, that both my knowledge and*
25 *virtue had their imperfections.* I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason [of things,] and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness [and] madness, *what was the greatest folly and madness a man*
26 *could be chargeable with.* And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart [is] snares and nets, [and] her hands [as] bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. *I found nothing more puzzling to the human understanding and dangerous to virtue than the arts of a wicked woman; the grosser snares and a fondness for meats and*

drinks, a watchful, pious man may escape; but she is so great a plague, that God often gives a man up to her, as a punishment for
27 *his former sins.* Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher,
28 [counting] one by one, to find out the account: Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found. *He diligently observed the characters of all about him, and found very few men worthy of friendship and throughly to be trusted, whose real sentiments and dispositions he could find out; and fewer women that were so; he had generally found more wisdom, goodness, true friendship, and less artifice among men than wo-*
29 *men; but this is not to be charged upon God:* Lo, this only have I found, that God had made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions; *they have perverted their own ways, corrupted their original integrity, and devised many excuses for neglecting their duty. This chapter is so practical that we need not enter upon any particular reflections. Let it be seriously reviewed, that we may learn from it to cultivate a serious, prudent, humble, patient spirit; let the concluding part especially teach young men to be exceeding watchful against bad women, and exceeding cautious in the choice of wives; and younger women to be ambitious to retrieve the honour of their sex, and cultivate integrity, openness, and honour, which will be pleasing to God, and will render them amiable and useful in the world.*

CHAP. VIII.

Solomon proceeds to some prudential directions which will conduct a man to true happiness; beginning with a general encomium upon wisdom.

1 WHO [is] as the wise [man?] *who is so excellent as he?* and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? *understands things himself, and is useful to others?* a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed; *it gives him an agreeable countenance, takes away every thing morose, sour, and forbidding, and gains him respect and esteem.*

2 I [counsel thee] to keep the king's commandment *in all lawful things,* and [that] in regard of the oath of God, *not merely to avoid his displeasure, but out of a principle of conscience and a re-*
3 *gard to God.* Be not hasty to go out of his sight, *to leave his presence or service through passion and discontent:* stand not in an evil thing; *if thou hast in any respect offended, though thou mayest escape him for a while, he will find an opportunity to pun-*
4 *ish thee;* for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. Where the word of a king [is, there is] power *to execute his commands:* and who may say unto him, What doest thou? *who shall call*

5 *him to an account without extreme hazard ?* Whoso keepeth the commandment, *continues dutiful and loyal,* shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judg-
6 ment *how to withdraw from public affairs without offending the prince, and when and how to give him humble advice.* Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man [is] great upon him; *men suffer much for want of prudence in not observing and seizing fit times, especially in courts.*
7 For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him
8 when it shall be? *he neither knows nor can any one tell him when the like opportunity will return.* [There is] no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither [hath he] power in the day of death: and [there is] no discharge in [that] war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. *Probably this is said with particular reference to princes; let them consider that there is no giving law to men's thoughts; and likewise that death is hastening toward them, when they must*
9 *give an account of all their tyranny and oppression.* All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: [there is] a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt, *yea, sometimes is dethroned and ruined in this*
10 *world.* And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the Holy, *that is, the seat of judgment, which is God's place,* and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done; *their pomp vanished with them, and could not so much as secure them an honourable remembrance:* this [is] also vanity.
11 *God has denounced a righteous sentence upon them, but* Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil;* *they grow licentious by the delay, and think of nothing but doing mischief.*
12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his [days] be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him; *who notwithstanding all the oppressions they suffer, continue obedient to him and their gov-*
13 *ernors:* But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong [his] days, [which are] as a shadow; because he feareth not before God: *plainly implying that there is a happiness in reserve for every good man; in comparison with which, a hundred years of prosperity enjoyed by a sinner, are not worth men-*
14 *tioning: but they see not this distinction made at present.* There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just [men,] unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked [men] to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; *just men are reproached, oppressed, and persecuted, and the wicked live in ease, affluence, and splendor:* I said that this also [is] vanity.

* As eastern executions were done speedily, perhaps this may intimate, that if God's judgments were as speedy as theirs, they would not dare to act as they do.

15 Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun; *it is better to enjoy the good things of life in the fear of God, than to torment ourselves with the fear of losing them, or to pretend to account for many dispensations of Providence.*

16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also [there is that] neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes;) *to expound this mystery of Providence, I was as diligent and solicitous as those*
17 *men are to get wealth who allow no sleep to their eyes:* Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek [it] out, yet he shall not find [it;] yea, further; though a wise [man] think to know [it,] yet shall he not be able to find [it;] *therefore let us not disquiet ourselves about it, but cheerfully acquiesce in the divine government.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IF we desire to be easy and happy, we must honour the king, observe the laws of our country, and not unnecessarily blame the administration. No argument can be drawn from this charge, for passive obedience, though many commentators have attempted it. We are many of us under the obligation of the oath of God, and all are obliged to allegiance, as being born subjects of the kingdom, and enjoying the protection of the government. Let us then *be subject not for wrath only, but for conscience sake:* and if we would not be afraid of the power, let us do that which is good.

2. It is a point of great wisdom in every circumstance and station of life, to attend to times and seasons, and embrace proper opportunities for doing good. This is an important maxim, not only for courtiers but for all of us. Whence is it that man's misery is so great upon him, but because he is rash and thoughtless, will not look before him, and watch opportunities of honestly mending his circumstances and retrieving his errors; but through giddiness or dulness suffers them to slip? Hence also it is, that men fall into great and endless misery in the other world; because they will not hear God's voice today, and redeem their time. Let us then mind this wisdom, because time is short, death is at the door, and *there is no discharge in that war.*

3. How sad is it to abuse the patience and goodness of God! What Solomon says of wicked princes, is true of other wicked men, *v.* 11. They know God has passed sentence upon them for their iniquities; but because his patience bears long with them, they grow hardened, and sin the more. Yet the sentence will be executed; and though they live ever so long and prosperously, *it shall be ill with them.* May the goodness of God then lead us to repentance, and his long suffering be to us salvation.

4. We are here taught our duty amidst the mysterious conduct of Providence. We see good men afflicted, and wicked men prosperous; we should not therefore fret or disquiet ourselves about it, but enjoy the good things of life with thankfulness, cheerfulness, and charity. Let us not puzzle ourselves in endeavouring to account for this, for the attempt will be vain; it is God's ordering, who is infinitely wise and good, and the justice, beauty, and propriety of these seeming irregularities will appear at last. When difficulties therefore occur which we cannot solve, let us always remember, abide by, and act upon this thought, *Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him*, v. 12.

CHAP. IX.

Solomon having in a former chapter made some observations on the unequal distribution of good and evil, he here directs us what our conduct should be amidst these mysteries of Providence.

1 FOR all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous and the wise, and their works, [are] in the hand of God; *are under his conduct and protection, he orders their affairs in the wisest and kindest manner; therefore we should not complain, but cheerfully refer events to his disposal: nevertheless* no man knoweth either love or hatred [by] all [that is] before them; *it does not appear at present whether God*
2 *loves or hates them.* All [things come] alike to all: [there is] one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as [is] the good, so [is] the sinner; [and] he that sweareth, as [he] that feareth an oath.
3 This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all; *this has been a great perplexity to my mind, and a strong temptation:* yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead; *they encourage themselves in a course of wickedness, and so hasten their*
4 *own death.** For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope *that they may be recovered from their calamitous state;* for a living dog is better than a dead lion; *a living man, in the lowest circumstances, is more serviceable to the world than the greatest*
5 *prince when dead.* For the living know that they shall die, *are capable of considering and improving the thoughts of death:* but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten; *they are incapa-*
6 *ble of any thing, and soon forgotten.* Also their love, and their

* Some suppose the following verses to be the observations of an epicure, who took occasion to declare his disbelief of a future state; but I take them to be Solomon's words, speaking only of the present life.

hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun; *no one seeks their favour, or fears their displeasure: there-*
7 *fore* Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works: *as far as this mortal life is in question, instead of indulging anxiety, and puzzling thyself with intricate questions, endeavour to live in a cheerful manner; for if thou art one that feareth God, he accepteth*
8 *thee, and would have thee be joyful.* Let thy garments be always white, *neither be sordid nor sad;* and let thy head lack no ointment; *let thy appearance be as pleasant as it innocently may.*
9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity; *this is repeated to remind us that we are not to expect complete satisfaction, but to make the most we can of every relation, to sweeten the troubles of life:* for that [is] thy portion in [this] life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun; *yet indulge not in pleasures so far as to become slothful and dissolute, but attend to the proper business of life.*
10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do [it] with thy might; for [there is] no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest; *do not presume too much on your own wisdom, industry, and power, nor yet neglect every proper exertion of them.*
11 I returned and saw under the sun, that the race [is] not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour, *or preferment*, to men of skill; but time and chance, *or occurrences*, (1 *Kings* v. 4.) happeneth to them all; *sudden accidents*
12 *start up in which all a man's cunning, valour, strength, and influence, are ineffectual.* For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so [are] the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them; *they do not foresee the evils that may come, or the day of their death; both may come suddenly: yet we are not to neglect prudent precautions.*
13 This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it [seemed]
14 great unto me: [There was] a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and
15 built great bulwarks against it: Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom, *by some wise counsel or stratagem*, delivered the city; yet no man remembered that
16 same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom [is] better than strength: nevertheless, the poor man's wisdom [is] despised, and his words are not heard; *such is the folly and ingratitude of men, that they pay more regard to external appearances than to wisdom; yet*
17 *this instance shows that wisdom is the principal thing, for* The words of wise [men are] heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools; *his words, delivered calmly and without ostentation, are more regarded than the noise of an inso-*

18 *lent, overbearing man.* Wisdom [is] better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good; *one foolish obstinate man, by his perverseness often puzzles and ruins a good cause, and defeats the endeavours of the wisest of men.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here taught not to judge of men by their outward condition, or the events that happen to them. Though we are so often exhorted to this in scripture, yet we are ready to forget it. God's love and hatred to men is not to be estimated by their external circumstances; but though the same events may happen to both, yet the design and end of them may be widely different.

2. We see what kind of provision the word of God makes for our living comfortably. How frequently are we admonished to enjoy the good things of life, and consult our own comfort, under the limitation of sobriety and wisdom. God certainly never gave us so many good things to be snares and temptations to us. It is pleasing to him that we should rejoice in his favours, and show the cheerfulness of our minds by our dress, diet, and converse with others. It especially becomes those to rejoice in God's good creatures whose works he accepts. Innocent mirth becomes none so well as those that are good. There is no religion in a slovenly dress, a meagre diet, or a gloomy spirit. God would have all his servants cheerful, and thus show that their master is good, and their work pleasant.

3. Let the uncertainty of all earthly things promote in us caution, diligence, and prayer: caution that we do not exceed in unreasonable mirth, and live without thought and fear. We know that we must die, and that there is nothing to be done in the grave; therefore we should be diligent; embrace every opportunity to do good and get good; be active in the business of our stations, and especially in the work of religion. Opportunities will soon be over; and after death it will be too late to correct our errors and mend our state. To our diligence we should also add prayer; for *the race is not to the swift.* If it were always so, men would forget God: but the fact being otherwise, it is a plain proof of an overruling Providence, and a call to remember our dependence upon him, and make our requests known to him.

4. We must not think the worse of wisdom, or be backward to pursue it, because it is despised and goes unrewarded. What Solomon observed in his time, has been observed ever since, that wise and useful men are often neglected; and noisy insolent fools caressed. Many who spend their days and their strength in serving their fellow creatures, have neither recompense nor honour, nor perhaps thanks. But we should not be discouraged from doing our duty by the world's ingratitude. If they are not sensible of the pains we take for their benefit, we shall have the satisfaction of having done good; at least of having honestly endeavoured to do it; and *God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love,* but will bountifully reward it.

CHAP. X.

The principal design of this chapter is to teach us to behave loyally and dutifully to rulers, as what will contribute to our peace and happiness.

1 DEAD flies cause the ointment of the apothecary, *or perfumer*, to send forth a stinking savour: [so doth] a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom [and] honour;
the wiser any man is, the more care he should take of his words and actions; it is not so much the want of knowledge, as of atten-
2 *tion and prudence that lessens men's characters.* A wise man's heart [is] at his right hand; *he goes readily and wisely to work; performs things with dexterity, in the proper time and manner, and in the most decent order;* but a fool's heart at his left; *he goes awkwardly to work, and therefore generally miscar-*
3 *ries.* Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth [him,] and he saith to every one [that] he [is] a fool; *he cannot so much as conceal his folly in the plainest things; he betrays his indiscretion by his gait and air; especially by being a few minutes in his company, you will find he is empty and con-*
4 *ceited.* If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; *do not grow sullen and discontented, and quit his service; a meek, humble behaviour may reconcile him;* for yielding paci-
5 fieth great offences. There is an evil [which] I have seen under the sun, as an error [which] proceedeth from the ruler;
6 *viz. not taking sufficient care whom he promotes:* Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich, *men of considerable rank and abil-*
7 *ity*, sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, *persons of a mean, servile, mercenary disposition advanced*, and princes, *men of great worth*, walking as servants upon the earth. *But do not on account of these irregularities foment factions against the*
8 *government, for* He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso
9 breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; [and] he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby; *he that would remove the ancient land marks of government, cut in pieces the society to which he belongs, and break the hedge and fence of public authority, will find*
10 *he does it to his own hurt.* If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength:* but wisdom [is] profitable to direct; *a man should exercise prudence in the common affairs of life; especially in any attempt to mend a bad government; he had better whet his tool before he begins his work, and consider of the proper means beforehand, or else he will find it*
11 *more difficult and troublesome.* Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment, *that is, without hissing; the wound will be felt before the creature's voice is heard;* and a babler is no better,

* Some have thought proper to censure this as a trifling, impertinent observation; but Homer represents Nestor (the wisest among the Greeks) as instructing his son in the art of prudence, and mentions this simile as an illustration.

who without reserve tells in one place what he has heard in another,
12 *especially if it be any thing too free about the government.* The words of a wise man's mouth [are] gracious, *pleasing to his prince;* but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself; *bring*
13 *him to trouble and sometimes to death.* The beginning of the words of his mouth [is] foolishness: and the end of his talk [is] mischievous madness; *he works himself up into a heat, and then says what doth mischief to others, and brings ruin upon himself.*
14 A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him who can tell him? *Probably a description of the fool's manner of talking, who multiplies words unnecessarily, or rather, talks confidently of what he will do, and what he will have, and of things past, present, and to come, or in such a foolish manner that you cannot tell from what he is saying what he will say; he rambles on in impertinence.*
15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because
16 he knoweth not how to go to the city; *a fool takes most pains about, and yet blunders in the most plain and obvious things.* Wo to thee, O land, when thy king [is] a child, *a weak, foolish man,* and thy princes eat in the morning; *are persons addicted to luxury and intemperance, indulging their appetites, when they should be engaged in public business, feasting in a morning, when*
17 *they should be trying important causes.* Blessed [art] thou, O land, when thy king [is] the son of nobles, *of an illustrious family and excellent qualities,* and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, *to fit them for their proper business,* and not for drunk-
18 enness! By much slothfulness the building decayeth, *the rain gets in and rots it;* and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through. *This is the case in private life; and it is so in government; by luxury and sloth the whole government*
19 *is disordered, and oftentimes dissolved.* A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all [things;] *it procures all worldly advantages; therefore rulers should not waste the public treasure in luxury and folly, which they may want to support the state.*
20 Curse not the king, no not in thy thought, *neither his person nor government;* and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter; *a proverbial expression, and intimates, that by some surprising, unexpected method, it may be discovered, as if a bird flying by had heard and told it.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the benefit of wisdom and prudence, even in the common affairs of life. If we have nothing to do with the government of the nation, yet we should be careful to rule ourselves and our houses well. Let us cultivate that wisdom which is profitable to direct; and learn it by thought and observation on

the conduct of others. Let us learn to do things readily and dexterously; to concert the means well; lay good plans, and pursue them with resolution and caution; that our judgment may not fail us when difficulties occur. There is room for improvement in every branch of wisdom, and by it we shall save ourselves much pains, and probably much shame.

2. Let us earnestly pray that our king may be directed in the choice of counsellors and officers under him; that persons of true worth, honour, and virtue, may not be neglected, and men of shattered heads, and broken fortunes, advanced; that none may be raised to important offices, but those who will sacrifice pleasure to business, and keep their heads cool for counsel and judgment. Considering how much the welfare of the nation depends upon this, it should be the subject of our fervent prayers; for *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord.*

3. We should learn those lessons of loyalty and subjection, upon which our comfort and happiness so much depend, and guard against a factious complaining spirit. Too many by attempting to cure some defects in a well settled government, have done more harm than good. We are in general very incompetent judges of the administration of government; let us not therefore allow ourselves to find fault with it. Reviling those who rule over us, though done secretly, may be known; the providence of God may by some unsuspected way discover it, and then it will turn to our shame, and the reproach of our profession. Let us therefore *lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty: fearing God and honouring the king.*

4. We see that diligence and frugality are very necessary for private persons, as well as governors, v. 18. *By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house dropfeth through.* When men neglect their business, and desert their shops, to pursue their pleasures or to sit with vain persons, poverty, shame and distress will soon come upon them. v. 19. *A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry; but money answereth all things.* Yet this must be taken with limitation; for money cannot supply the wants of the soul; cannot save from sin, sorrow, death, and hell: but it contains a proper caution to young men especially, not to be expensive in entertainments, dress, or equipage; the feast of one day may consume the money that should support the family for a week; and leave none to do good with. Those who make the most splendid entertainments and the greatest appearance, are generally most backward to works of piety and charity; for there is neither charity nor justice without frugality and prudence: *but wisdom is profitable to direct.*

CHAP. XI.

Solomon in this chapter exhorts his readers to liberality, as the best antidote against the vanity of riches; and then urges a serious preparation for death and judgment.

1 CAST thy bread, *or corn*, upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. *Corn was the chief trade of Judea, and a very profitable one; in allusion to this Solomon intimates, that what is given is not thrown away, but, like corn, is sent on a*
2 *voyage, which in return will richly repay the merchant.* Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; *give in a very liberal manner, and take in as many objects as possible;* for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth, *how soon you may want the assistance of others; and you may expect their help and the peculiar care of Providence if you have been charitable.* If the clouds
3 be full of rain, they empty [themselves,] upon the earth; *Providence intended they should do so; and God gives us money, not to hoard up, but to do good with:* and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be, *and there is no hopes of its bringing forth any more fruit. Thus shall we soon be cut down, and whether we have been fruitful or barren, (as opposite characters as north and south) none can raise us up to the exercise of charity any more. Let us*
4 *not frame excuses for neglecting liberality; for* He that observeth the wind, *lest it should blow away his seed,* shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, *who is afraid of a little rain,* shall not reap, *and will make poor work of his husbandry; so he that withholds his charity till every objection can be answered, will never*
5 *bestow it.* As thou knowest not what [is] the way of the spirit, *or wind,* [nor] how the bones [do grow] in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all; *thou knowest not what will be in future; how he may prosper or impoverish thee; therefore be not anxious about*
6 *futurity, do thy duty, and leave the event to God.* In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both [shall be] alike good; *in youth and age, in prosperity and adversity, be always doing good, and depend upon God for the issue.*

7 Truly the light [is] sweet; and a pleasant [thing it is] for the eyes to behold the sun; *life and the comforts of it are very*
8 *agreeable:* But if a man live many years, [and] rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, *adversity and sorrow, especially death;* for they shall be many. All that cometh [is] vanity; *therefore be not too fond of earthly things, but labour to do all the good you can, which will afford the most*
9 *comfortable reflections.* Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; *this*

is generally understood ironically, as if he had said, Indulge all the pleasures to which your corrupt affections or natural inclinations lead; but know thou, *be assured of this,* that for all these [things] God will bring thee into judgment; *let this strike an awe upon* 10 *thy spirits, and engage thee to be religious.* Therefore remove sorrow, *or indignation, in allusion to the pride and haughtiness of youth in despising the religious advices of their friends,* from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; *the indulgence of irregular appetites and fleshly lusts:* for childhood and youth [are] vanity; *exposed to many strong temptations, very precarious, and may soon come to a period; therefore by serious religion remove evil and sorrow from thee, and remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us cultivate and manifest that liberal disposition, which Solomon in this chapter recommends by such weighty arguments. Let us abound in acts of kindness, according to the abilities God has given us, and not think that lost which is given away: though its return may be slow, yet it will be sure and happy. We know not what evil is before us. Covetous people think this a strange argument for charity; they urge it for saving, 'I may want myself;' but this is no wisdom in Solomon's opinion, for by charity we secure something, and may expect the kindness of men, but particularly the care of Providence in future calamities. We should observe the clouds, they do not hoard up their stores and grow bigger and bigger, but empty themselves and make the earth fruitful. Our opportunities will soon be over, and our future state fixed: and our being charitable or covetous will have a great influence upon it. Let us not therefore plead those idle excuses which are so common in the mouths of worldly men, but do good to all that we can, and trust Providence with every future event; *let us not be weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not.*

2. Let all, especially the young, seriously think of and prepare for death and judgment, for they are most ready to forget it. However pleasant your path may be, and though light may shine around you on every side, yet *remember the days of darkness;* you must expect your share of trouble and sorrow. Do not raise your expectations too high, but be moderate in your pursuits and enjoyments; affliction and death will certainly come; and *after death the judgment.* Young people should recollect the vanity of childhood and youth; what dangerous temptations surround them, and how uncertain life is; and should consider the future judgment to correct their love of pleasure, and keep them from sensual mirth. But if they will despise the advice of their friends, and *walk in the way of their own hearts,* they will bring evil upon their flesh and sorrow upon their souls, and will have a dreadful account to give at last. Let us all therefore, *seeing we look for such things, be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace at his appearing.*

CHAP. XII.

Solomon here recommends piety to young people, from a view of the infirmities of approaching age, and the prospect of sudden death; and urges a regard to what he had been saying from his own wisdom and care, and the excellency of such kind of writings: and concludes with recommending religion as what was absolutely necessary to come off well in the future judgment. This chapter is improperly divided from the former, the last verse of which is connected with the beginning of this; the most effectual method to put away evil and sorrow, and to relieve the vanity of childhood and youth, is what he here exhorts to.

1 REMEMBER now thy Creator, *think of him, fear, and serve him,* in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, *that is, the days of old age, which are full of trouble and sor-*
row, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no
2 pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, *before the comforts of life are obscured by the dulness of the senses;* nor the clouds return after the rain; *when one infirmity being removed, or a little abated, another*
3 *succeeds, or the former returns:* In the day when the keepers of the house, *the hands,* shall tremble, and the strong men, *the legs,* shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, *the teeth be loosened and drop out,* and those that look out of
4 the windows be darkened, *that is, the sight be decayed;* And the doors shall be shut in the streets, *when the mouth can hardly be opened to eat or speak,* when the sound of the grinding is low, *the digestion weak and disordered;* and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, *be easily awakened by every little noise, and rise early because his rest is broken,* and all the daughters of music shall be brought low, *the ear and voice shall fail, so that he can*
5 *neither sing himself, nor take pleasure in the music of others;* Also [when] they shall be afraid of [that which is] high, and fears [shall be] in the way, *when the spirits being broken, men grow timorous; dare not venture on high places, stumble at every clod, and fear where no fear is;* and the almond tree shall flourish, *the hair shall grow white,* and the grasshopper shall be a burden, *if it but leap on them it shall put them into a fright, or out of humour;* and the desire shall fail, *all appetite or relish for former pleasures be lost:* because man goeth to his long home, *is just dying,* and the mourners go about the streets, *every funeral reminds him of his own: the next verse does not refer to the consequences of old age, but is another argument for early piety, viz. that even in youth*
6 *death may come suddenly:* Or ever the silver cord, *the white nervous substance on the back bone, on which the motion of the lower parts depend,* be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, *that is, the brain, especially its yellow covering;* or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, *that is, the vital motion of the heart and lungs (so necessary to the cir-*

culation of the blood) cease: so curious is the contexture of the human frame, that its life is as easily and as suddenly destroyed as the motion of some complex machine is stopped, by loosing a cord,
7 *or breaking a bowl, or disordering a single wheel.* Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it, *to be fixed in its proper everlasting abode. This is the end of human life, and thus have I largely demonstrated the proposition I set out with.*

8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all [is] vanity.
9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, [and] set in order many proverbs; *this discourse is not a hasty performance, but the result of deep reflection and careful observa-*
10 *tion.* The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and [that which was] written [was] upright, [even] words of truth;
11 *he designed to please as far as he could consistent with truth.* The words of the wise [are] as goads, and as nails fastened [by] the masters of assemblies, *the words of the preacher are not only true but affecting; like goads quickening us to duty; or like nails that take fast hold, and leave an abiding impression upon the mind, when driven by the masters of assemblies, the preachers of truth,* [which] are given from one shepherd; *an allusion to the master shepherd, who gives a goad to him that drives the plough, or a nail to him that is to repair a building; so God, the great shepherd, has teachers and officers under him; no goads, no nails, are like his*
12 *word.* And further, by these, *by what has been said already,* my son, be admonished: of making many books [there is] no end; *I could easily write large volumes of these matters, but that is needless, seeing things necessarily lie in a narrow compass;* and much study [is] a weariness of the flesh; *a man may tire himself, and waste his strength and spirits in search of natural knowledge, but never arrive at full satisfaction.*

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, *my great design and the most important end of all I have said, viz.* Fear God and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man; *his whole duty and interest, for this weighty reason,*
14 *with which I conclude;* For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil; *though here all things come alike to all, our intentions as well as actions shall then be rewarded or punished, according to their respective natures.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET young people be entreated to attend to Solomon's advice; often to think of him who gave them their being, to consider what duties they owe him, to make a sense of him familiar to their minds, and to live in his fear and love; for this will soften the infirmities of age, or reconcile them to an early death.

2. This beautiful description of the infirmities of old age may be serviceable to all; particularly to old persons, to whom it ought to be familiar, and who should feel the force of every part of the description. Old age was the same in Solomon's days as in ours; its infirmities nothing but what are common to men, and therefore should be patiently borne. Let us pity the aged, endeavour to make their burdens as light as possible, and not increase them by contempt or neglect.

3. If all that Solomon has said of the vanity of the world does not convince us, great will be our folly and guilt; we shall ere long know the truth of it by bitter experience, and be ashamed of not believing him sooner. He has plainly proved the fact, and shown that it always was and will be fact. His conclusions are the result of divine inspiration, as well as close observation of men and things. We are not put off with trite remarks, and what comes next to hand; but have the strongest arguments methodically ranged, and all the arts of eloquence used to enforce his admonitions. Therefore let us believe that all is vanity, and act consistently with such a belief. Especially,

4. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. It cannot be too often repeated: to stand in awe of God, worship him religiously, and observe all his commandments, is the whole of man. This knowledge is plain. To compose and read many books is needless. If the scriptures will not make us wise, no other books will. Remember that this ought to be the principal care of all, young and old, rich and poor; for there is a day coming when every work and secret thing shall be brought into judgment. And let us remember that we are then to give an account of what attention we have paid to this book, and what advantage we have gained by this illustration of it.

The SONG of SOLOMON.*

CHAP. I.

1 THE song of songs, which [is] Solomon's. Let him kiss
2 me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love [is] better
3 than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy
name [is as] ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins
4 love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath
brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in
thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright
5 love thee. I [am] black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jeru-
6 salem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look
not upon me, because I [am] black, because the sun hath look-
ed upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they
made me the keeper of the vineyards; [but] mine own vine-
7 yard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,
where thou feedest, where thou makest [thy flock] to rest at
noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the
flocks of thy companions?
8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way
forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the
9 shepherds' tents. I have compared thee, O my love, to a com-
10 pany of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely
11 with rows [of jewels,] thy neck with chains [of gold.] We will
make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.
12 While the king [sitteth] at his table, my spikenard sendeth
13 forth the smell thereof. A bundle of myrrh [is] my well belov-
14 ed unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. My be-
loved [is] unto me [as] a cluster of camphire in the vineyards
15 of Engedi. Behold, thou [art] fair, my love; behold, thou [art]
16 fair; thou [hast] dove's eyes. Behold, thou [art] fair, my be-
17 loved, yea, pleasant: also our bed [is] green. The beams of
our house [are] cedar, [and] our rafters of fir.

* There is neither exposition nor improvement of the chapters of this Book in Mr. Orton's manuscripts. Whatever might have been his opinion of the authenticity of that Book, or the propriety of admitting it into the sacred Canon, this I am well satisfied of, that he thought it improper to be read or expounded either in public or in families. *Edit.*

CHAP. II.

1 I [AM] the rose of Sharon, [and] the lily of the vallies. As
2 the lily among thorns, so [is] my love among the daugh-
3 ters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so [is]
my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with
4 great delight, and his fruit [was] sweet to my taste. He brought
me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me [was] love.
5 Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I [am]
6 sick of love. His left hand [is] under my head, and his right
7 hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jeru-
salem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not
up, nor awake [my] love, till he please.
8 The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon
9 the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a
roe, or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he
looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lat-
10 tice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love,
11 my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the
12 rain is over [and] gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the
time of the singing [of birds] is come, and the voice of the tur-
13 tle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green
figs, and the vines [with] the tender grape give a [good] smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
14 O my dove [that art] in the clefts of the rock, in the secret
[places] of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear
thy voice; for sweet [is] thy voice, and thy countenance [is]
15 comely. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines:
for our vines [have] tender grapes.
16 My beloved, [is] mine, and I [am] his: he feedeth among
17 the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn
my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the
mountains of Bether.

CHAP. III.

1 BY night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth:
2 I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and
go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek
him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.
3 The watchmen that go about the city, found me: [to whom I
said,] Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? [It was] but a little
that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul lov-
eth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought
him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that
5 conceived me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by
the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor
awake [my] love, till he please.

6 Who [is] this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars
of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all pow-
7 ders of the merchant? Behold his bed, which [is] Solomon's;
three score valiant men [are] about it, of the valiant of Israel.
8 They all hold swords, [being] expert in war: every man [hath]
9 his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. King
10 Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He
made the pillars thereof [of] silver, the bottom thereof [of]
gold, the covering of it [of] purple, the midst thereof being
11 paved [with] love, for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth,
O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the
crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his es-
pousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

CHAP. IV.

1 BEHOLD, thou [art] fair, my love; behold, thou [art] fair;
thou [hast] dove's eyes within thy locks: thy hair [is] as
2 a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. Thy teeth
[are] like a flock [of sheep that are even] shorn, which came up
from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none [is]
3 barren among them. Thy lips [are] like a thread of scarlet,
and thy speech [is] comely: thy temples [are] like a piece of
4 a pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck [is] like the tower
of David builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand
5 bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts [are]
like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.
6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to
7 the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Thou
8 [art] all fair, my love; [there is] no spot in thee. Come with
me from Lebanon, [my] spouse, with me from Lebanon: look
from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon,
9 from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou
hast ravished my heart, my sister, [my] spouse; thou hast rav-
ished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy
10 neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, [my] spouse! how
much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine oint-
11 ments than all spices! Thy lips, O [my] spouse, drop [as] the
honeycomb: honey and milk [are] under thy tongue; and the
12 smell of thy garments [is] like the smell of Lebanon. A gar-
den inclosed [is] my sister, [my] spouse; a spring shut up, a
13 fountain sealed. Thy plants [are] an orchard of pomegranates,
14 with pleasant fruits; camphire with spikenard, Spikenard and
saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;
15 myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: A fountain of gar-
dens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.
16 Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my
garden, [that] the spices thereof may flow out. Let my belov-
ed come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

CHAP. V.

1 I AM come into my garden, my sister, [my] spouse; I have
gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honey-
comb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk:
eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.
2 I sleep, but my heart waketh: [it is] the voice of my beloved
that knocketh, [saying,] Open to me, my sister, my love, my
dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, [and] my
3 locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how
shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile
4 them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole [of the door,]
5 and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my
beloved; and my hands dropped [with] myrrh, and my fingers
6 [with] sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I
opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself,
[and] was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him,
but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no an-
7 swer. The watchmen that went about the city found me, they
smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took
8 away my veil from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I [am] sick of love.
9 What [is] thy beloved more than [another] beloved, O thou
fairest among women? what [is] thy beloved more than [anoth-
10 er] beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved [is] white
11 and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head [is as]
the most fine gold, his locks [are] bushy, [and] black as a raven.
12 His eyes [are] as [the eyes] of doves by the rivers of waters,
13 washed with milk, [and] fitly set. His cheeks [are] as a bed of
spices, [as] sweet flowers: his lips [like] lilies, dropping sweet
14 smelling myrrh. His hands [are as] gold rings set with the
beryl: his belly [is as] bright ivory overlaid [with] sapphires.
15 His legs [are as] pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold:
16 his countenance [is] as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His
mouth [is] most sweet: yea, he [is] altogether lovely. This
[is] my beloved, and this [is] my friend, O daughters of Jeru-
salem.

CHAP. VI.

1 WHITHER is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among
women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we
2 may seek him with thee. My beloved is gone down into his
garden, to the beds of spices; to feed in the gardens, and to
3 gather lilies. I [am] my beloved's, and my beloved [is] mine;
he feedeth among the lilies.
4 Thou [art] beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jeru-
5 salem, terrible as [an army] with banners. Turn away thine

eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair [is] as
6 a flock of goats that appear from Gilead. Thy teeth [are] as
a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every
one beareth twins, and [there is] not one barren among them.
7 As a piece of a pomegranate [are] thy temples within thy locks.
8 There are three score queens, and four score concubines, and
9 virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is [but] one:
she [is] the [only] one of her mother, she [is] the choice [one]
of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her;
[yea,] the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.
10 Who [is] she [that] looketh forth as the morning, fair as the
moon, clear as the sun, [and] terrible as an [army] with ban-
11 ners? I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of
the valley, [and] to see whether the vine flourished, [and] the
12 pomegranates budded. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me
13 [like] the chariots of Amminadib. Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.

CHAP. VII.

1 HOW beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daugh-
ter! the joints of thy thighs [are] like jewels, the work
2 of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy navel [is like] a
round goblet, [which] wanteth not liquor: thy belly [is
3 like] an heap of wheat set about with lilies. Thy two breasts
4 [are] like two young roes [that are] twins. Thy neck [is] as
a tower of ivory; thine eyes [like] the fish pools in Heshbon,
by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose [is] as the tower of Leb-
5 anon, which looketh toward Damascus. Thine head upon thee
[is] like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the
6 king [is] held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art
7 thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm
8 tree, and thy breasts to clusters [of grapes.] I said, I will go
up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now
also, thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of
9 thy nose like apples; And the roof of thy mouth like the best
wine for my beloved, that goeth [down] sweetly, causing the
lips of those that are asleep to speak.
10 11 I [am] my beloved's, and his desire [is] toward me. Come,
my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the
12 villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if
the vine flourish, [whether] the tender grape appear, [and] the
13 pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves. The
mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates [are] all manner of
pleasant [fruits,] new and old, [which] I have laid up for thee,
O my beloved.

CHAP. VIII.

1 O THAT thou [wert] as my brother, that sucked the
breasts of my mother! [when] I should find thee with-
2 out, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised. I would
lead thee, [and] bring thee into my mother's house, [who] would
instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the
3 juice of my pomegranate. His left hand [should be] under my
4 head, and his right hand should embrace me. I charge you, O
daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake [my]
5 love until he please. Who [is] this that cometh up from the wil-
derness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the
apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she
brought thee forth [that] bear thee.

6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:
for love [is] strong as death; jealousy [is] cruel as the grave:
the coals thereof [are] coals of fire, [which hath] a most ve-
7 hement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can
the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of
his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall
9 we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? If
she [be] a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and
10 if she [be] a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar. I
[am] a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes
11 as one that found favour. Solomon had a vineyard at Baalha-
mon: he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for
12 the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand [pieces] of silver. My
vineyard, which [is] mine, [is] before me: thou, O Solomon,
[must have] a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof
13 two hundred. Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the compan-
ions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear [it.]

14 Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a
young hart upon the mountains of spices.

THE

Book of the Prophet ISAIAH.

INTRODUCTION.

ISAIAH began to prophesy about seven hundred and sixty years before Christ, and continued to exercise his office in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh, by whom it is generally thought he was sawn asunder, after a faithful discharge of his office for more than sixty years. He was contemporary with the prophets Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah. He is remarkable for loftiness of thought and style; his images are often borrowed from the appendages of royalty, (which were familiar to him, being one of the royal family;) and are elegant and noble. His prophecies, especially of the Messiah, are so clear, minute, and circumstantial, that they might often seem to be rather narratives of things past, than predictions of things to come; hence he is commonly called the Evangelical prophet; and it is observed, that there are more passages cited in the New Testament out of this one prophet, than out of all the others. Of these prophecies, the five first chapters are generally supposed to have been delivered in the reign of Uzziah, the sixth in the reign of Jotham, the following chapters to the fifteenth, in the reign of Ahaz, and the remainder in that of Hezekiah.

CHAP. I.

This chapter contains a severe remonstrance against the ingratitude and corruptions of the Jews in that age; warm exhortations to repentance; heavy threatenings to the impenitent; and, after previous corrections, gracious promises of better times.

1 THE vision of Isaiah, *or, the clear discovery that was made to Isaiah*, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah. *The prophet, with a boldness and majesty becoming the herald of the most High, begins with calling on*
2 *the whole creation to attend when Jehovah speaks.* Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled
3 against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: [but] Israel doth not know *their relation to me*, my

people doth not consider *the great things that I have done for*
4 *them.* Ah sinful nation! *an expression of wonder, anger, grief, and shame,* a people laden with iniquity, *guilty of great and heinous sins,* a seed of evil doers, *a generation treading in the steps of their forefathers,* children that are corrupters, *or destroyers, both of themselves and others:* they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward, *grown worse and worse, and insolently turned*
5 *their backs upon me.* Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more; *intimating that corrections were intended for their amendment, but that when found ineffectual God would cease to use them:* the whole head is sick, and the whole
6 heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head [there is] no soundness in it; [but] wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment; *the whole state is corrupt, and no at-*
7 *tempts are made for reformation. Therefore* Your country [is] desolate, your cities [are] burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and [it is] desolate, as over-
8 thrown by strangers.* And the daughter of Zion, *that is, Jerusalem,* is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city; *it is contemptible, like a mean hut in a vineyard, which is not regarded when the vintage is over; or rather, like a besieged city, from which every one is glad to flee.*
9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, *a few good men,* we should have been as Sodom, [and] we should have been like unto Gomorrah, *entirely swallowed up and destroyed.*
10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah, *ye who are*
11 *like them in wickedness.* To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not
12 in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? *who hath required such kind of attendance*
13 *without sincerity and a pious disposition?* Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with;
14 [it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble
15 unto me; I am weary to bear [them.] And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear, *nor regard your services:* your hands are full of blood; *cruelty, oppression, and murder are found among you.*
16 *Therefore, if you hope for acceptance,* Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes;

* This was probably uttered in the reign of Ahaz, or when Jerusalem was besieged by Sennacherib.

17 cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the
18 oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come
now, and let us reason together, *and accommodate the difference that is between us*, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool; *your sins shall be fully pardoned:*
19 *and not only so, but*, If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat
20 the good of the land, *enjoy all sorts of temporal blessings:* But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it.]
21 How is the faithful city become an harlot?* it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, *in the time of David and Solomon;* but now murderers, *and consequently many other hein-*
22 *ous criminals.* Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water; *corruption is mingled with every thing that is good:*
23 Thy princes [are] rebellious *against God*, and companions of thieves, *unjust to men:* every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them; *they refuse to do right to*
24 *those that cannot bribe them.* Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me†
25 of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: And I will turn my hand upon thee, *to punish those things which I have connived at before*, and purely purge away thy dross, and take
26 away all thy tin, *separate the bad from the good:* And *after the captivity* I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning, *as in the time of the judges:* afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faith-
27 ful city. Zion shall be redeemed, *or saved*, with judgment, and her converts, *those that return from the captivity*, with righteous-
28 ness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners [shall be] together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be
29 consumed. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen; *they shall be ashamed and confounded when they see that their gods which were worshipped in groves and gar-*
30 *dens, cannot save them.* For *as ye have sinned under oaks and in gardens, so* ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water, *deprived of all your enjoyments and*
31 *delights.* And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench [them;] *the makers and the worshippers of idols shall be easily consumed by my judgments, yea, their work shall be as a spark, that is the instrument of consuming them.*

* Cities are often represented by women. Jerusalem was once a faithful betrothed virgin; the covenant between her and God was faithfully kept.

† An expression taken from men, who find ease in venting their anger and punishing incorrigible offenders.

REFLECTIONS.

1. NATIONAL sins bring national judgments. This chapter contains a beautiful and strong description of the wickedness of Israel, aggravated by all the great things which God had done for them; who, not being reformed by corrections, should be awfully punished; and neither their holy nor royal city should secure them. Corruptions of the body politic, like the cancer or leprosy spreading over the natural body, are exceeding dangerous and loathsome, and will end in death; the few good men that remain preserve it. This calls for our humiliation, lest, resembling Israel in guilt, we should suffer like them. Let us labour to be ourselves of the remnant, and increase the number of those who stand in the gap.

2. How dangerous is it to rest in the externals of religion, while obedience is wanting. This people were punctual in their sacrifices and ritual observances; they kept their feasts, and prayed; yea, made many prayers, and spread forth their hands, to show their earnestness. But God would not hear; yea, he was greatly displeased, even by their religious exercises, because they continued wicked. If men are ever so zealous for the forms of religion, yet are destitute of the power of it, violate the laws of God, injure and oppress their brethren, all their prayers and services are hypocrisy. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law*, shall find that *God will turn away his ear from hearing his prayer.*

3. We see the grace of God in inviting sinners to return to him, and the happy consequences of such returns. What ample encouragement is here given to this wicked people! Scarlet and crimson sins shall be pardoned, peace restored, and public blessings continued, if they will turn to God, be obedient to his laws, and willing and cheerful in his service. Thus does God reason the case with sinners now; thus does he promise them mercy upon their repentance; and if they will not hear, their condemnation will be righteous, and God will be justified when he judgeth them.

CHAP. II.

This chapter begins with a prophecy of the establishment of the gospel, and then proceeds to foretell the destruction of the Israelites for their idolatry, referring principally to the captivity.

1 THE word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning
2 Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, *the days of the Messiah, under the christian dispensation*, [that] the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it; *the christian church shall be planted, become conspicuous, and be firmly established, as on*

3 *the top of a mountain.* And many people shall go and say
Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the
house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways,
and we will walk in his paths; *an allusion to the Jews inviting
one another to the great feasts; thus shall they join themselves to
the christian church, and invite others to do so;* for out of Zion
shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusa-
4 lem, *the gospel shall be first published there.* And he shall judge
among the nations *by his word and providence,* and shall rebuke
many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough-
shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not
lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any
more; *referring to the peaceable tendency of the gospel, and the*
5 *union between Jews and Gentiles in the latter days.* O house of
Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD; *the
Jews in those days shall be invited to receive and improve this gra-
cious dispensation.*
6 Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob,
because they be replenished from the east, and [are] soothsay-
ers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the chil-
dren of strangers, *with the idolatry and superstitious practices of
the heathen; glad of any strangers to teach them a new kind of*
7 *idolatry.* Their land also is full of silver and gold, *unjustly got-
ten, and abused,* neither [is there any] end of their treasures;
their land is also full of horses, *which was contrary to the law,*
8 neither [is there any] end of their chariots. Their land also is
full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that
9 which their own fingers have made: And the mean man bow-
eth down, and the great man humbleth himself; *men of all ranks
and degrees give themselves up to stupid idolatry;* therefore for-
give them not, *that is, they shall not be forgiven. Then follows
the description of their being carried into captivity, and by that
means cured of their idolatry.*
10 Enter into the rock, *that is, ye shall enter into it,* and hide thee
in the dust, *in order to conceal yourselves,* for fear of the LORD,
and for the glory of his majesty; *'when he ariseth to strike the*
11 *earth with terror.'** The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,
and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD
alone shall be exalted in that day; *the impotence of idols shall be*
12 *demonstrated in the destruction of their worshippers.* For the day
of the LORD of hosts, *the day of his vengeance,* [shall be] upon every
[one that is] proud and lofty, and upon every [one that is] lifted
13 up; and he shall be brought low: And upon all the cedars of
Lebanon, [that are] high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of
14 Bashan, And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the
15 hills [that are] lifted up, And upon every high tower, and upon
every fenced wall; *either literally, because their idolatries were
practised on high places, or figuratively, on their great men and*

* Lowth.

16 *magistrates ;* And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all
pleasant pictures ; *upon their trading ships, and the curiosities*
17 *they imported.* And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down,
and the haughtiness of men shall be made low : and the LORD
18 alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall ut-
19 terly abolish. And they, *the idolatrous Israelites*, shall go into
the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear
of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth
to shake terribly the earth ; *when he causes great commotions and*
20 *troubles in the land.* In that day a man shall cast his idols of
silver, and his idols of gold, which they made [each one] for
himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats ; *he shall bury*
them under ground, or hide them in dark corners, being ashamed of
21 *them as they were unable to help him ;* To go into the clefts of
the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the
LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to
22 shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath
[is] in his nostrils : for wherein is he to be accounted of ? *A*
general caution to cease from man ; or perhaps it refers to Heze-
kiah, in whose grave their prosperity, and almost all their religion
too, was buried. This verse should properly have began the next
chapter.

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW thankfully should we improve the light and advantages afforded us by the gospel ! This prophecy has been accomplished, christianity has been preached, established, and secured against oppression. This nation hath flowed to it : we were once darkness, but now walk in the light of the Lord. What a delightful idea of religion ! We here see the end of ordinances, and what should be our view in attending upon them. We should come to learn in order to practise, to help each other forward, excite one another to a christian behaviour, and *provoke one another to love and to good works.*

2. See how easily God can humble the proud by his judgments, and make them sick of what they are most fond of. Pride is the reigning sin in the human heart ; against this the judgments of God are peculiarly levelled, and when they come they will appear terrible to those that defied them. The dearest lusts will be looked upon with abhorrence, and the most precious idols rejected with disdain. Gold or silver unjustly gotten, or covetously hoarded, will be grievous to the possessor, and the pleasant pictures of which men are fond will be thrown away with contempt ; yea, the nice and delicate will be glad to run into the caves of the earth, when God brings an enemy into the land. But especially at the great day, when the kings of the earth and the rich men shall hide themselves in dens and caves, and say unto the rocks, *Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*

3. The consideration of men's frailty and mortality should moderate our dependence upon them and affection to them. The greatest and proudest are not secure; when judgments come, princes and kings will die like other men. Let us consider this, as a motive to cease from them, and not unreasonably to fear their power or court their favour. We should not place too much confidence in any men, even the wisest and best, for they are dying creatures; and the higher our expectations are raised, the greater will be our disappointment. *Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever.*

CHAP. III. CHAP. IV. v. 1.

This chapter contains a prophecy of the calamities that should come upon the Jews in the declension of their state; particularly of their captivity. There is a reference in this to the former chapter.

1 FOR, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away
from Jerusalem and from Judah, *amidst the confusion that*
shall follow, and especially at the siege of Jerusalem, the stay and the
2 staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, The
mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet,
and the prudent, and the ancient, *many of such shall be carried*
3 *away in the captivity*, The captain of fifty, and the honourable
man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the elo-
4 quent orator. And I will give children [to be] their princes,
and babes, *persons of no understanding or capacity*, shall rule
5 over them. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by
another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave
himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the
honourable; *seditious people shall insult those that are in power.*
6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of
his father, [saying,] Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and
[let] this ruin [be] under thy hand; *the government and mag-*
istracy shall go a begging, any body that shall have but a good
coat, shall be urged to be a ruler, and to undertake the prevention
7 *of the ruin coming upon them.* In that day shall he swear, say-
ing, I will not be an healer; for in my house [is] neither bread
nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people; *I have nei-*
ther ability for, nor will I expose myself to the danger of the office.
8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their
tongue and their doings [are] against the LORD, to provoke the
9 eyes of his glory. The show of their countenance doth witness
against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, *that is, in*
the most impudent manner, they hide [it] not. Wo unto their
soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.
10 Say ye to the righteous, that [it shall be] well [with him:]
11 for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked!

[it shall be] ill [with him:] for the reward of his hands shall be given him, *a command to the priests and Levites to say thus in their sermons to the people.*

12 [As for] my people, children [are] their oppressors, and women rule over them; *persons of weak understanding and effeminate spirits:* O my people, they which lead thee, cause
13 [thee] to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people, *the poor and*
14 *the oppressed.* The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof, for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor [is] in your houses.
15 What mean ye [that] ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor, *treat them in the most cruel and inhuman manner?* saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

16 Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing [as] they go, and making a tinkling with
17 their feet:* Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts; *they shall be reduced to rags that cannot cover their nakedness, or be led captive naked, according to*
18 *the cruel usage of eastern countries.* In that day the LORD will take away the bravery of [their] tinkling ornaments [about their feet,] and [their] cauls, and [their] round tires like the moon,
19 20 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets,
and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tab-
21 22 lets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples,
23 and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the
24 hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, [that] instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness: and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; [and] burning instead of beauty; *they shall be sun burnt in consequence of being made slaves.*†

25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.
26 And her gates shall lament and mourn, *because there are no passengers to go through them:* and she [being] desolate shall sit upon the ground, *as mourners used to do.*

1 CHAP. IV. And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach; *notwithstanding the natural reserve of the sex, they shall solicit to be married, and be content to maintain themselves. This must have been peculiarly grating to ladies of so much delicacy, luxury, and pride.*

* This refers to the ornaments worn about their ancles, which are still used by the eastern ladies; and it is reckoned a mark of polite and delicate education to know how to make a noise with them, by striking one foot against the other.

† See Bp. Lowth's Isaiah for a more just and beautiful translation of these particulars.

REFLECTIONS.

1. OBSERVE from hence, how much all our national comforts and blessings depend upon God. Bread and water, the lives of princes, statesmen, judges, officers, and all their skill, courage, wisdom, and eloquence; he can easily take away any, or all of these, by death, or captivity; or disable them from being of any further service to the public. He can destroy union among the people, and give them up to faction or sedition. Let this teach us not to be confident of the continuance of any of our public blessings. *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

2. National judgments are different in their consequences upon different persons, according as their characters are. *It shall be well with the righteous*, at all adventures. God commands his prophets to tell them so; they have abundant comfort amidst all their fears and alarms. They have the joyful testimony of conscience, and the hope of a glorious reward hereafter. But *it shall be ill with the wicked*; judgments peculiarly heavy shall fall upon them: or, however prosperous they may be here, *the reward of their hands shall hereafter be given them.* They need nothing else to make them thoroughly miserable than to be left to the consequences of their own folly.

3. We are here taught, that cruelty to the poor is peculiarly displeasing to God, and that he will severely avenge it. There are many oppressive landlords, creditors, and masters, who abuse those that are under their power. Many who enrich themselves by the spoils of their neighbours; who tyrannize over workmen, and refuse them a just allowance for their labour; but *God will stand up and plead* for such as are thus oppressed: and haughty oppressive people will do well to consider in time *what they will do when God rises up, and when he judges what they will answer.*

4. Let the daughters of Britain learn how odious pride, luxury, and extravagance of dress are to God, and how they increase the guilt of a nation. It is very likely that the daughters of Zion thought Isaiah a very rude and unpolite man in reproving them for their dress; but he had good authority for so doing, *the Lord saith.* And his being so particular is a plain intimation how nice and curious they were about their dress, how much time and money they spent upon it, which might have been better employed; how much they delighted in finery, so that it engrossed their thoughts and conversation. Ministers therefore, having so good an authority, should caution young women against this vice; which shows a proud, weak mind, generally defeats the very end proposed by it, offends God, and contributes to national judgments. They should be as clean and neat as possible; but not nice and curious. They should not waste their precious moments in following every fantastic fashion, lest their delicacy be followed by servitude, poverty, nakedness, and disgrace. Those will be worse able to bear any one

of these, who have been devoted to the follies of dress, expected much waiting on, and have been averse to any thing like labour: hear the words of the apostle, 1 *Peter* iii. 3, 4. *Whose adorning let it not be that of plaiting the hair, but a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.*

CHAP. IV. 2, to the end. CHAP. V. 1—8.

After the prophecy of the calamities of Israel, Isaiah proceeds to foretell the glory of the Messiah's kingdom.

2 IN that day shall the branch of the LORD, *the Messiah*, be beautiful and glorious *in the sight of God and all good men*, and the fruit of the earth [shall be] excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel, *who shall escape the destruction*
3 *before mentioned, and be converted by the gospel.* And it shall come to pass, [that he that is] left in Zion, and [he that] remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *that is, the first converts to christianity shall be eminently so*, [even] every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, *or, in the Lamb's book*
4 *of life; an allusion to the Jewish registers of families*: When the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem, *their murders and oppressions, especially slaying the prophets and the Messiah*, from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning; *by his holy spirit producing purity and zeal among them.*
5 And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory [shall be] a defence; *when he shall have thus purged them, he will manifest his power in protecting their families and places of worship. Here is nothing said about the temple, but an allusion to the pillar of cloud, whereby God intimates that he would preserve*
6 *and protect them in a glorious manner.* And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain; *an allusion to the tents which travellers carried with them in the east, which they used when they passed over the deserts; and it intimates that God would be their defence in all extremities. The prophet then describes the ingratitude and unfruitfulness of the Jews, as a reason why God sent his judgments upon them. He begins with representing in a beautiful parable, God's tender care of his people, and their unworthy returns to his goodness.*
1 CHAP. V. Now will I sing to my well beloved, *that is, to Christ, to whom the care of the Jewish church was committed, and which is often represented as a vineyard*, a song of my beloved touching his vineyard: My well beloved hath a vineyard in a
2 very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones

thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, *for the safe and convenient residence of the keeper, (probably referring to the temple,)* and also made a wine press therein, *removed all the hindrances, and gave all the means of fruitfulness:* and he looked that it should bring forth grapes,
3 and it brought forth wild grapes, *or poisonous berries.* And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard; *though yourselves are*
4 *parties, the case is so plain, that I leave it to your judgment.* What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? *hath any thing been wanting on my part?* wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? *how can this disappointment be accounted for?*
5 And now, go to, *or rather, come now, and* I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; [and] break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; *I will quite withdraw my protection, and give Israel up as a prey to their enemies; their state and church*
6 *shall be quite ruined:* And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it: *they shall lose all their outward blessings and spiritual privileges.*
7 *Then comes the explanation of the parable:* For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts [is] the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; *a country in which he took delight, and did more for its inhabitants than for any other people:* and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry; *of the oppressed, to men for help, and to God for vengeance.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE have great cause to be thankful for our national blessings. No nation upon earth has more reason to apply these things to themselves than we have. God hath taken care of us as his vineyard, hath given us all desirable blessings, temporal and spiritual. Christ, the branch, hath as it were sprung up among us, and we enjoy the glorious fruits of it in the gospel of peace. We have the protection of heaven on our dwelling places; and, what deserves our especial thankfulness, on our solemn assemblies; upon every thing that is the glory of our land *the Lord hath created a defence.* Let us seriously reflect how valuable these blessings are, and how few enjoy them, that we may be inspired with sentiments of gratitude to God. Nevertheless,

2. We should be very cautious and watchful, lest we forfeit these blessings. The end for which they were given and are continued to us is, that *we may be fruitful:* it is the design of all to make us holy and obedient. Let this then be our aim; for no lasting happiness can be expected till *the filth of our land be purged away;* and that will not be, without the spirit of judgment and burning, which

we should daily and earnestly implore. If we go on in sin, God may justly deprive us of our privileges, and take the gospel away from us. And we must allow it to be just and reasonable that he should, for what could God have done more? Therefore let us *not be high minded, but fear.* This parable is also applicable to particular persons, and the advantages they enjoy. We have conscience, scripture, ordinances, and ministers; if we are unfruitful, God will take away his grace; deny the dews of his blessings; and what was our inexcusable sin, will be our just and dreadful punishment, we shall be quite barren and useless. Let us labour therefore to answer and repay the divine cultivation, to *have our fruit unto holiness, and the end will be everlasting life.*

CHAP. V. 8, to the end.

The prophet here threatens judgments upon the nation, principally referring to the captivity; and specifies the particular sins for which God would punish them.

8 WO unto them that join house to house, [that] lay field
to field, *who engross all trade, profits, and estates to themselves, from a principle of insatiable avarice, and to the injury of their neighbours,* till [there be] no place, that they may be placed
9 alone in the midst of the earth! In mine ears [said] the LORD
of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, [even] great
10 and fair, without inhabitant. Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall
yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah,
that is, but a tenth part; so that they shall have no comfort in
11 *their houses and lands.* Wo unto them that rise up early in the
morning, [that] they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, [till] wine inflame them! *who make a trade of drinking, and thus waste their time, their substance, and their health, and*
12 *inflame their lusts and passions by it.* And the harp, and the viol,
the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard
not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his
hands; *they delight in mirth and pleasure, but regard neither the*
13 *merciful nor afflictive dispensations of Providence.* Therefore
my people are gone, *that is, they shall go,* into captivity, because [they have] no knowledge: and their honourable men
[are] famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst; *this was the case at the siege of Jerusalem, and the devastation of their*
14 *country by the Chaldeans.* Therefore hell hath enlarged herself,
and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and
their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it, *like Korah and his company. A dreadful image, to*
15 *represent the suddenness and terror of their destruction.* And the
mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be
humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled; *as they were*

16 *joined together in sin, so shall they be in punishment:* But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is ho-
ly shall be sanctified in righteousness; *his power and holiness shall be seen and magnified in the righteous judgments brought*
17 *upon the wicked.* Then shall the lambs feed after their manner; *the pious poor, who are left in the land, shall be supported and pro-tected;* and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat; *strangers shall devour what the rich men got by covetousness and*
18 *oppression.* Wo unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope; *who set themselves*
19 *seriously and resolutely about it, and encourage others in it:* That say, Let him make speed, [and] hasten his work, that we may see [it:] and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know [it!] *who say that the prophetic threatenings are all bugbears, and that God can-*
20 *not or will not do as they have said.* Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
who confound the nature of virtue and vice, contrary to their judg-
21 *ment and knowledge.* Wo unto [them that are] wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight, *and so despise the*
22 *prophet's instructions!* Wo unto [them that are] mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; *who drink a great deal without being disordered, and boast of it as an*
23 *accomplishment:* Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him, *by condemn-*
24 *ing and punishing him!* Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, [so] their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up as dust; *they shall be destroyed root and branch, like a tree rotten at the root:* because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and
25 despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses [were] torn, *or, shall be as dung,* in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still, *he will yet take further vengeance upon them.*

26 And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, *to the Chaldeans,* and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly; *he will collect them with the utmost ease, as shepherds gather their sheep by*
27 *whistling:* None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken; *he will strengthen them for their work, and nothing shall hinder them in*
28 *their march:* Whose arrows [are] sharp, and all their bows bent, *completely armed for destruction;* their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, *they shall not be broken by the roughness of the road,* and their wheels like a whirlwind, *which intimates the*

29 *swiftness of their march, and the violence of the attack:* Their roaring [shall be] like a lion, they shall roar like young lions, yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry [it] away safe, and none shall deliver [it,] *neither the Jews them-*
30 *selves, nor the Egyptians, whom they defended upon.* And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea; and if [one] look unto the land, behold darkness [and] sorrow: and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof; *every thing about them shall be terrible, black, and dismal.*

REFLECTIONS.

FROM this chapter we are taught, that a sinful state is a woful state, and should particularly attend to the awful woes denounced against some transgressors.

1. Against those who are guilty of insatiable covetousness: a vice particularly prevalent in corporate towns, encouraged by their monopolists, and pleaded for in defence of their rights. It appears in being greedy of gain, opposing and undermining others of the same business, striving to get all trade to themselves, and artfully depriving others of the means of supporting their families. It is just in God to disappoint such greedy persons, and to blast their endeavours; at least, he will punish them hereafter for their avarice and cruelty.

2. Let the votaries of riot and mirth attend to their doom, as here pronounced by the Almighty. Let drunkards hear and tremble; and know, that God will punish them who tarry long at the wine, though they can go home sober: the mispence of their substance and time, the inflaming of their lusts and passions by strong drink, are sins with which he is highly displeased. Yea, let those who are given to pleasure, and spend their time in mirth, gaming, and gay assemblies, which ought to be devoted to reading and prayer, considering the works of God, and taking care of their families, remember, that there is a wo against them, though they should not drink to excess. But,

3. The most wicked and dangerous sinners are those who confound the difference between good and evil. The difference is as great as between light and darkness; yea, as plain and evident to the mind, as the difference between light and darkness is to the eye, or that between sweet and bitter to the taste. These are they who argue against the principles and practice of religion, and misrepresent the ways of God, gloss over the practices of sin, and labour to weaken the restraints of piety, and justify that which is evil. As in this they act contrary to the light of nature and the convictions of conscience, their guilt is highly aggravated.

4. We see upon the whole the ground of God's controversy with nations: it is for these and such like sins abounding in them, and particularly that which is at the bottom of all, *v.* 24, refusing to submit to his reproofs and receive his instructions; and despising the counsel of his messengers and the commands of his law.

These predictions were intended as warnings to Israel, and they are written for our admonition; that, if we desire the prosperity of our country, and the salvation of our own souls, we *may live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world.*

CHAP. VI.

Here is a new commission given to the prophet, to promote his reverence for God, his activity and perseverance in his work, and to encourage him amidst the unsuccessfulness of his ministry.

1 IN the year that king Uzziah died I saw also, *in a dream, or a vision when awake*, the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, *the Shekinah, or glory of the Lord, which was Christ, (John* xii. 41.) and his train, *or skirts*, filled the temple.
2 Above it, *or beside it*, stood the seraphims; *an allusion to the cherubim attending the ark; they are called seraphims, or burnings, to express their holy nature and fervent zeal:* each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. *This is very expressive of their reverence of God, and their activity in executing his commands.*
3 And one cried unto another, *alternately expressing their transports of zeal and joy*, and said, Holy, holy, holy, [is] the LORD of hosts; *he is supremely and unchangeably holy in all his dispensations and judgments:* the whole earth [is] full of his glory; *his perfections now shine in his works and providence; but it shall*
4 *be more so in gospel times.* And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke, *in token of God's indignation against his people.*
5 Then said I, Wo [is] me! for I am undone, *or, I am struck dumb*, because I [am] a man of unclean lips, *I am a polluted sinful creature, unfit to be employed in any service for God*, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts; *I have seen him in all*
6 *his splendor and purity, appearing as a judge.* Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand,
7 [which] he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid [it] upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged; *this is a sign that thy guilt is pardoned, and that a commission is given thee to be a preacher and reprover to this people.*
8 Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? *He asked not for information, but that Isaiah might willingly offer himself.* Then said I, Here [am] I; send me; *I am very willing to go now my incapacity is*
9 *removed.* And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not; *though I give you the means of instruction, and lay before you*

things most worthy of seeing and hearing, yet by my prophet I
10 *foretell that ye will not be affected with them.* Make the heart of this people fat, *stupid and hardened, that is, declare that it shall be so; be not wanting to instruct and reprove them, though this should be the consequence;* and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed, *or pardoned. Thus Jeremiah is said to build and destroy kingdoms, and Ezekiel is said to destroy Jerusalem, because they fore-*
11 *told that they should be destroyed.* Then said I, Lord, how long *shall this judgment, this judicial blindness continue?* And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; *till utter destruction come upon them as a nation: referring to their de-*
12 *struction by the Romans, forty years after Christ's time;* And the LORD have removed men far away, and [there be] a great forsaking in the midst of the land; *till many flee away, and others are carried captive by the Romans, so that very few are left.*
13 But yet in it [shall be] a tenth, *or tythe of the inhabitants,* and [it] shall return *to God,* and shall be eaten, *that is, be acceptable to him, as the tythe was eaten by the priest, and is called meat in his house:* as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance [is] in them, when they cast [their leaves;] *like a tree that seems withered and dead in winter, yet is alive and shall sprout again:* [so] the holy seed [shall be] the substance thereof; *those who embrace the gospel shall preserve the nation from utter ruin, and at length it shall flourish again; so that the Jews shall never be entirely cast off, but in due time be numbered again among God's people.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us make this grand description of the Lord Jehovah familiar to our minds. He is exalted above all cherubims; attended with an innumerable company of bright and holy beings. Observe with what humility and reverence they appear before him, covering their faces. With what ardour and zeal do they praise him! with what activity and speed do they execute his commands! May we engage in religious services with the same disposition! contemplate and adore him as superlatively holy; and particularly think of him in this light when earthly kings die. In the year Uzziah died, who was upon the whole a good king, and reigned very long, Isaiah saw this vision. It was comfortable, in such circumstances, to reflect on the Lord as the King eternal and immortal; and to think that he has committed all judgment to his Son, whose glory, as the image and representative of Jehovah, the prophet saw.

2. When we seriously consider the infinite purity and holiness of God, we may justly tremble before him. We are ready to think Isaiah was very happy in such a sight as this; but, exalted as his

genius and piety were, he cries out, *Wo is me! for I am undone.* We are all men of polluted lips; have said many rash and unholy things; are unfit to appear before the Lord, and unworthy to be employed as his servants; therefore it becomes us to be afraid of his righteous displeasure, and to abase ourselves deeply before him. *God is greatly to be feared, and to be had in reverence of all them that draw nigh unto him.*

3. How honourable is it to be employed for God, and how cheerfully should we engage in his service! It should be the great desire of all christians, as the servants of God, more especially of ministers, to have their iniquity purged, their guilt removed, their inclinations to sin mortified, and to have a comfortable sense of pardon and peace. We should all be willing to work for God; and though the times may be bad, and we may meet with many discouragements in our christian work, and see little hope of success in our endeavours to do good, yet still our language should be, *Here am I, Lord; send me.* It is honour enough to be employed for God, though our work should be unsuccessful. But this is an additional comfort, that *our work is with the Lord*, and we shall by no means lose the reward.

4. What a deplorable condition is theirs, who hear the gospel, but are made worse by it. This is the case of the Jews; and this passage is quoted six times in the New Testament, and applied to them by Christ and his apostles. And it is the case of too many christians; they hear, but understand not; will not apply their minds to consider and attend to their own concern in it; so that they continue in sin, and are not healed; yea, they are given up to spiritual blindness, and their hearts grow harder by their misimprovement of the means of grace. Let us beware that this case be not ours. It is indeed a very discouraging circumstance to ministers, that it is so common a case; but there is this to balance it, that there is a holy seed, a pious remnant, that will hear, learn, and improve; and that while the word of God is to some a savour of death unto death, it is to others of life unto life, and they are a savour to God in both.

CHAP. VII.

The design of this chapter is, to assure the house of David, or royal family, that they should not be destroyed by the kings of Syria and Israel, who were confederate against them, but should be punished by the king of Assyria, in whom they trusted.

1 AND it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham,
the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, [that] Rezin the king
of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went
up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail
2 against it. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria
is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and

the heart of his people, *that is, the royal family*, as the trees of
3 the wood are moved with the wind. Then said the LORD unto
Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy
son, *whose name signifies*, '*the remnant shall return*,'* at the end
of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's
4 field; And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not,
neither be faint hearted, for the two tails of these smoking fire-
brands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son
of Remaliah; *do not give way to anxious fears, for these two*
5 *kings are but as two firebrands which are almost consumed.* Be-
cause Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil
6 counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and
vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king
in the midst of it, [even] the son of Tabeal; *thus pretending to*
the crown of Judah, and designing to overthrow the house of David:
7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it
8 come to pass. For the head of Syria [is] Damascus, and the
head of Damascus [is] Rezin; *as Damascus is the head city of*
Syria, and Rezin is the head or king of Damascus, so they shall
continue to be, and not advance themselves, and enlarge their terri-
tories, as they design; and within three score and five years,
9 shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.* And the
head of Ephraim, [is] Samaria, and the head of Samaria [is]
Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be
established; *if ye will not trust what God says, and rely upon him*
for deliverance, but seek out for foreign support, you shall never
prosper in any design for the securing your peace and comfort, as
it came to pass, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 20.
10 11 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask
thee a sign of the LORD thy God, *some miracle to confirm the*
truth of this prediction; ask it either in the depth, or in the height
12 above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the
LORD; *being secretly determined not to trust Providence, but*
to seek help from the king of Assyria, therefore for political reasons
he would not ask a sign; though he pretended religion and a re-
13 *gard to God as the reason.* And he said, Hear ye now, O house
of David? [Is it] a small thing for you to weary men, but will
ye weary my God also? *This is not only a slight to me, but to*
14 *the patience and kindness of God.* Therefore the LORD him-
self shall give you a sign, *a double sign, one, that the house of*
David should not be totally destroyed, the other, that they should
speedily be delivered; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and
bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel; *an illustrious*
15 *prophecy of Christ. Nevertheless*, Butter and honey shall he eat,
that he may know, *or till he knows how*, to refuse the evil, and
choose the good, *that is, he shall be bred up as other children are.*

* Accordingly, from the first year of Ahaz, when this confederacy was formed, and this prophecy delivered, it was just sixty five years to the twenty second year of Manasseh, when the king of Assyria carried away the last of the ten tribes, and planted colonies of other nations in their stead, and probably took Manasseh captive at the same time. It was broken from being a kingdom by the former Assyrian kings, but not broken from being a people till now.

The land shall continue its fruitfulness, and be capable of nourishing its inhabitants, till he is born; and as he is to be born of the
16 *house of David, this is a sign that that house shall not fall.* For before the child, *that is, this child that is now in my hand, Shearjashub my son, v.* 3, shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest, *the land that thou carest for with great concern, the land of Judah, of which they have now got possession,* shall be forsaken of both her kings; *the king of Syria and the king of Israel, shall both be destroyed by the king of Assyria, and the two hundred thousand captives they have taken shall be restored by the influence of God upon their minds; according to the meaning of the name of the prophet's son. See 2 Kings* xv. 29, 30. xvi. 9.

Nevertheless God will send a more terrible enemy upon them,
17 *because Ahaz will not trust God, but seek help from Assyria:* The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; [even] the king of Assyria, *to*
18 *whom you have sought for help.* And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the LORD shall hiss for the fly that [is] in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that [is] in the land of Assyria; *the multitude of their enemies shall be like swarms of flies or bees, from which no rank, and no place shall*
19 *be secure.** And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate vallies, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes; *overspread and make havock of the*
20 *whole country.* In the same day shall the LORD shave with a razor, that is hired, *the Assyrians, whom thou hast hired to defend thee,* [namely,] by them beyond the river *Euphrates,* by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard; *he shall make a great and general de-*
21 *struction.* And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep, *so few cattle shall be*
22 *left;* And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk [that] they shall give, *by reason of their having so much room to feed, on account of the country being depopulated, that* he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land; *they shall have no flesh to eat, neither corn, wine, nor oil, the produce of cultivation, but only milk and honey, the gifts of*
23 *nature.* And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, *or shekels, that is, so much a year,* it shall [even] be for briars and thorns; *it shall be wasted, and overrun with briars*
24 *and thorns.* With arrows and with bows shall [men] come thither, *to destroy wild beasts or hunt for food;* because all the
25 land shall become briars and thorns. And [on] all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, *that is, the choicest grounds that were used to be tilled, and where the vineyards used to be*

* The Assyrians had conquered Egypt before this, and had many Egyptians in their army.

planted, there shall not come thither the fear of briars and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle; *there shall be no hedge to defend them, but the cattle shall graze upon them, that is, there shall be a general desolation of all the country.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here shown the necessity and advantage of faith in God in troublesome and dangerous times. It is our duty to take heed, to be quiet, to rule our spirits, to command our passions, and have faith in God; that is, to maintain a firm belief of his overruling Providence, and guard against that fear which hath torment. His words are true, his declarations are faithful; he knows how to deliver from the most formidable enemies; let us therefore *commit our way to the Lord, trust also in him*; and thus shall we *dwell safely, and be quiet from the fear of evil.*

2. Let us bless God that this sign is come to pass, and that this glorious prophecy of Christ is fulfilled! He was born of the Virgin Mary; his name was called Immanuel. God is with us, dwelling in human nature, and at peace with us. We should thankfully receive him as the Messiah, who is to reign over the house of David, and whose kingdom is everlasting. We should diligently seek an interest in him, and all lesser deliverances should lead our thoughts to this great deliverer, who is God's salvation to the ends of the earth.

3. Though God may not entirely cast off his people, yet he may see it needful to correct them. Though Judah should be delivered from the designs of Syria and Israel, yet they should be punished by the king of Assyria; though the house of David should not totally be ruined, yet great calamities should come upon the land. God often deals thus with his people. Though he does not quite forsake them, or give them up to ruin, yet *he visits their iniquity with a rod, and their transgression with stripes.* We should therefore maintain a holy caution and fear of sin, and glorify God by a faithful obedience to all his commands.

CHAP. VIII.

This and several following chapters are prophecies of the troubles of Judah by the Assyrians; intermingled with prophecies of the Messiah, for the encouragement of the believing Jews.

1 MOREOVER the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen, *in the common way of writing, and in a plain, legible manner, for the use of all,*
2 concerning Mahershalalhashbaz, *the name of his child.* And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and

Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, *to be witnesses that I now*
3 *delivered and recorded these prophecies.* And I went unto the
prophetess *my wife;* and she conceived and bare a son. Then
said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz, *which*
4 *signifies,* ' *make speed to the spoil; hasten to the prey.*' For be-
fore the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my
mother, *that is, before the child shall be able to speak plain enough*
to say father and mother, the first thing that children commonly
learn, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be
taken away before, *or by,* the king of Assyria, *and the wealth*
thereof sent into his own country; (which accordingly came to pass, 2
5 *Kings* xvi. 9. xv. 29.) The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,
6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, *a little*
brook that ran through Jerusalem, that go softly, and rejoice in
Rezin and Remaliah's son; *are many of them uneasy at Hezeki-*
7 *ah's reformation, and wish well to the confederates;* Now there-
fore, behold, the LORD bringeth up upon them the waters of the
river *Euphrates,* strong and many; *a great power, as much su-*
perior to theirs as Euphrates was superior to Shiloah; [even]
the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up
over all his channels, and go over all his banks; *not keep within*
his own bounds, but invade and overrun the whole land of Israel,
8 *as an overflowing river does the neighbouring meadows:* And he
shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he
shall reach [even] to the neck, *to Jerusalem; so that the king-*
dom shall be like a man up to his neck in water and in danger of
drowning; and the stretching out of his wings, *his spreading*
army, shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel; *a plain*
intimation that Judah should not be quite forsaken, since it was
Christ's land; he was to be born, to live, and to die there.
9 Associate yourselves, O ye people *of Syria and Israel,* and ye
shall be broken in pieces; and give ear all ye of far countries,
ye Assyrians; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces;
10 gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel
together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it
shall not stand; *however confident of success, all is in vain;* for
God [is] with us, *or, it is Immanuel's land.*
11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, *by an*
extraordinary impulse he infused courage into me, and instructed
me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,
12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all [them to] whom this people
shall say, A confederacy; *though this is the popular cry, and*
every one is afraid of it, yet neither fear ye their fear, nor be
13 afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and [let] him [be]
your fear, and [let] him [be] your dread; *give him glory for his*
14 *power and providence.* And he shall be for a sanctuary, *that is,*
a place of defence; or He, according to some, refers to Immanuel,
spoken of before; he shall be a sanctuary to all believers, especially
among the gentiles; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of
offence to both the houses of Israel, *that is, both Benjamin and*
Judah, who would not believe, for a gin and for a snare to the

15 inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stum-
ble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken; *their*
sin shall be aggravated, and their punishment increased, by what
Christ shall do; and he will give them up to a spirit of blindness
16 *and error.* Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my dis-
ciples. *These are the words of Christ; as if he had said, Let the*
meaning of these prophecies be in righteous judgment concealed
from the wicked Jews, but let my disciples receive them, that is,
understand and believe them: the accomplishment will explain
them, be an evidence of God's truth, and a justification of those
17 *who depend upon him.* And I will wait upon the LORD, that
hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for
him. *This, some think, is the language of the prophet; as if he*
had said, I will firmly expect this happy event, though I see no
present marks of the divine favour to Israel: but it is rather, the
language of Christ; I will wait for him to manifest his favour to
18 *the gentiles.* Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath
given me [are] for signs and for wonders in Israel from the
LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion; *which may mean,*
that the children of the prophet were types and figures of great
things; or rather, that the gentiles, Christ's spiritual seed, the
children of Abraham by faith, should be wondered at for believing
19 *these promises, and trusting in the Messiah.* And when they
shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits,
and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; *the pious Israel-*
ites shall answer, should not a people seek unto their God? for
the living to the dead? *Should they seek for living men to dead*
20 *idols? how absurd and stupid were this!* To the law and to the
testimony, *keep close to them:* if they speak not according to
this word, [it is] because [there is] no light, *no understanding,*
21 *no piety* in them. And they shall pass through it, hardly be-
stead and hungry; *distressed and famished:* and it shall come to
pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves,
and curse their king and their god, and look upward; *that is,*
when unbelievers pass through the land, they shall curse their king
22 *or rulers for hiring the Assyrians.* And they shall look on the
earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish,
they shall look upward and downward, and see nothing but per-
plexity and sorrow; and [they shall be] driven to darkness, *to*
gloom and accumulated distress.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us reflect with pleasure on the care which the prophets took to prove their prophecies authentic. They did not merely speak them, and commit them to memory or tradition, but wrote them in a plain, legible manner; and did it before witnesses, who probably subscribed the same, and were ready to declare upon oath that they saw the prophet write or attest it, that it might be read and appealed to in order to support the faith of the people in

what they foretold. This remark tends to confirm our faith in the prophecies; and the same remark, in some measure, is applicable to the whole scripture.

2. There is need of great resolution not to be led away by popular panics or common errors. The prophet himself seems to have been in danger of catching the fears of the people, therefore it was that God warned him against it with a strong hand, with a considerable force on his mind. We are ready to catch the groundless terrors of others, to imitate their example, and walk in the way of the people around us. We ought to watch against this, and labour after a sober singularity; earnestly praying that God would secure us against the infection of ill examples, and preserve us in the way of holiness and peace.

3. A holy fear of God is the best remedy against the fear of man. 1 *Peter* iii. 14. *Sanctify the Lord of hosts in your hearts; and make him your fear and your dread;* give him the glory of his power, providence, and promises; reverence his universal dominion; fear his displeasure; and acquiesce in his disposals. This will keep our minds in peace; preserve us from that fear which hath torment: and *he will be our refuge and strength, and a very present help in time of trouble.*

4. Let us be thankful for the law and the testimony, and keep close to them. What is sealed up from the blinded Jews, is opened to us, the disciples of Christ, who have seen many of these prophecies fulfilled. Let us learn hence, to reverence and study the scriptures, to abhor the wicked practices of those who use spells and charms, who pretend to discover secrets and tell fortunes: this is heinous wickedness, and ought never to be encouraged by any that believe in the providence and word of God. It is our duty to seek direction from him by prayer, and consult his word; to conform to it in sentiments and practice; otherwise we shall displease him, and wander in the paths of error, sin, and ruin. Let his testimonies be our delight and our counsellors; they will guide us in a safe and pleasant way, and conduct us to a happy end.

CHAP. IX. CHAP. X. 1—4.

The same prophecy is continued, as in the former chapter. It is here foretold that the troubles of Judah should not be so great as those of the other ten tribes, because they should be but short, and then the promised Messiah should come.

1 NEVERTHELESS the dimness [shall] not [be] such as [was] in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict [her;] *or, as it may be better translated, as the first time made vile the land of Zebulun, (that is, by the Assyrians,) so the latter time shall make them glorious,* [by]

the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.*
2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light:
they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, *that is, the thickest and most perplexing darkness*, upon them hath the light
3 shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, [and] not increased
the joy; *or rather, and hast increased the joy to him, or to it, that is, to the Jewish nation:* they joy before thee according to the
joy in harvest, [and] as [men] rejoice when they divide the
4 spoil, *their joy shall be exceeding great.* For thou hast broken
the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of
his oppressor, as in the day of Midian; *as when Gideon overthrew the Midianites, (Judges* vii. 22.) *by such unlikely and con-*
5 *temptible means.* For every battle of the warrior [is] with confused noise, *with shouts, and groans, and sounding of arms*, and
garments rolled in blood; but [this] shall be with burning [and]
fuel of fire; *referring to the deliverance of God's people by Christ, from the yoke of sin and Satan. The preaching of the gospel might seem an unlikely means, but it should be successful, owing to the influences of the Spirit which should be like fire, and spread like a*
6 *flame.* For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and
the government shall be upon his shoulder: *this deliverance shall certainly be accomplished, for Christ shall be born for our redemption*, and his name shall be called, *that is, he shall be the* Wonderful, Counsellor, *acquainted with the counsels of God, so as to reveal the most important truths to men,* The mighty God, the everlasting Father, *the great almighty governor, and the father of the ages, or the dispensation to come, and* the Prince of Peace;† *he shall be peaceful himself, and promote the peace of his*
7 *subjects.* Of the increase of [his] government and peace
[there shall be] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his
kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with
justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this, *for his own honour and the happiness of mankind. The following verses contain a prophecy of the calamity and destruction of the ten tribes.*
8 The LORD sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon
Israel; *because they would not regard it, therefore it fell upon*
9 *them with great violence, as an insupportable burden.* And *the threatening shall be accomplished, for*, all the people shall know,
and feel the truth of it, [even] Ephraim and the inhabitant of
10 Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, The
bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the
sycamores are cut down *by our enemies*, but we will change [them

* It is called Galilee of the Gentiles, because it was peopled by many of the heathen, by reason of its nearness to Tyre and Sidon, and to distinguish it from the other Galilee; and thus it agrees exactly with the quotation in the New Testament. Bp. Lowth translates the verse thus: 'But there shall not hereafter be darkness in the land which was distressed. In the former time he debased the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time he hath made it glorious, even the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations.'

† Bp. Lowth translates it, 'The mighty God, the father of the everlasting age, the prince of peace.'

11 into] cedars ; *thus defying the judgments of God.* Therefore
the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him,
that is, Israel ; and join his enemies together ; *the Syrians, Is-*
rael's allies, being conquered by the Assyrians, shall be forced to
12 *serve against Israel.* The Syrians before, and the Philistines
behind ; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth, *like a*
wild beast. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his
hand [is] stretched out still ; *he will continue to punish them.*
13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither
14 do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut
off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day ; *the*
15 *rich and poor, the noble and the base.* The ancient and honoura-
ble, *the prince and the magistrate ;* he [is] the head ; and the
prophet that teacheth lies, he [is] the tail, *the most contemptible*
16 *of all the people.* For the leaders of this people, *their governors*
and prophets, cause [them] to err, and [they that are] led of
17 them [are] destroyed. Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in
their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless
and widows : for every one [is] an hypocrite, *a profane person,*
and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly ; *they have no*
pity on those that used to be the objects of complacency, or of com-
passion. For all this, *because all are alike corrupt,* his anger is
18 not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still. For
wickedness burneth as the fire : it shall devour the briars and
thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they
shall mount up [like] the lifting up of smoke ; *it produceth mise-*
ry and causeth ruin, and the high and low shall be devoured by it.
19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened,
and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire : no man shall
spare his brother ; *civil wars shall be among them, and they shall*
20 *destroy one another.* And he shall snatch on the right hand,
and be hungry ; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall
not be satisfied : *there shall be a grievous famine, so that they*
will be ready to eat their own flesh ; they shall eat every man
the flesh of his own arm ; *shall prey upon those that might have*
21 *defended them.* Manasseh, Ephraim ; and Ephraim, Manas-
seh ; *even they who have been leagued together against Judah,*
shall devour one another ; [and] they together [shall be] against
Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand
[is] stretched out still.

1 CHAP. X. WO unto them, *to those Israelites,* that decree
unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness [which] they
have prescribed, *who are guilty of injustice and oppression, of*
passing unrighteous sentences, and those who put them in execu-
2 *tion.* To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take
away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may
3 be their prey, and [that] they may rob the fatherless ! And
what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation
[which] shall come from far, *from the Assyrians ?* to whom
will ye flee for help ? *what ally will ye seek to then ?* and where

will ye leave your glory? *your wealth that you gained by oppres-*
4 *sion, who shall secure it?* Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain; *because you have cast me off, and I have forsaken you, ye shall be taken prisoners and slain.* For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WHAT a blessing is the gospel that brings light, joy and liberty to the nations. Without it the world was in darkness and danger; but when the sun of righteousness arose, a glorious light spread itself; and men are guided by it in the way of truth, peace, and happiness. The burden of grief and guilt is taken away by the word and spirit of God, the yoke of sin and Satan is broken, and they become free. No wonder this occasions great joy; especially when the gospel comes with power on particular souls, and produces these blessed effects.

2. A glorious idea is here given us of the person, offices, and government of Christ, which it is proper and comfortable to reflect upon. He is wonderful in his person and offices; a counsellor, as he discovers the most important truths, and the gracious purposes of God; a mighty God, able to save unto the uttermost; the father of the age, the greatest friend and benefactor to it; and he is the prince of peace, whose administration is righteous, peaceful, and happy; and whatever opposition may be made to it, it shall increase and prosper, till it terminates in everlasting glory; *of his government and peace there shall be no end.* Let us reverence this glorious prince, and magnify the Lord of hosts, whose pity, love, and zeal have performed all this for us.

3. We are taught the design of affliction. God smites us that we may turn to him, and seek him with sincerity and fervour. If this end be not answered, his hand will be stretched out still to correct us more heavily. Let us therefore humble ourselves under his mighty hand, and comply with the designs of his providence, that the stroke may be turned away from us, and our afflictions be succeeded by hope and joy.

4. We see the sad consequences of continuing unreformed by the judgments of God, *ch.* x. 3. A day of visitation will come; a day of judgment and strict inquiry into our conduct, and the principles on which we have acted; and a day of desolation to the impenitent, when no place shall be found to which they may fly; all their glory shall vanish, and they shall find it no more. It becomes us all seriously to think of this day of visitation, and secure a refuge in Jesus Christ; that we may *obtain that salvation, which is by him unto eternal glory.*

CHAP. X. 5, to the end.

We have here an account of the design of the Assyrians in invading Judah, and God's design in permitting it; and also a prophecy of their destruction, and the deliverance of God's people.

5 O ASSYRIAN, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their
hand is mine indignation; *the Assyrian monarch is my*
6 *instrument; my anger against Israel gives him all his power.* I
will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the
people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the
spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like
the mire of the streets; *the Israelites are hypocritical, they*
are not hearty in Hezekiah's reformation, nor sincere in their
prayers and professions; therefore the Assyrian shall plunder their
7 *country, and strip them of their wealth.* Howbeit he meaneth
not so, neither doth his heart think so; *he does not intend to do*
my will; but [it is] in his heart to destroy and cut off nations
not a few; *to enlarge his dominions, and gratify his ambition.*
8 For he saith, [are] not my princes altogether kings? *have not*
I many princes tributary to me, and are not my courtiers and offi-
9 *cers as great as kings?* [Is] not Calno as Carchemish? [Is] not
Hamath as Arpad? [is] not Samaria as Damascus? *are not the*
cities of Judah as easy to be taken as those I have already conquer-
10 *ed?* As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and
whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Sama-
11 ria; Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do
to Jerusalem and her idols? *as my hand hath destroyed kingdoms*
and cities whose gods are reckoned more powerful than Jeho-
12 *vah, shall I not as easily destroy Judah?* Wherefore it shall
come to pass, [that] when the LORD hath performed his whole
work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *when I shall have done*
what I intended, and chastened and humbled my people, I will
punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and
the glory of his high looks. *I will punish his high words, which are*
13 *the fruit of his proud heart.* For he saith, by the strength of my
hand I have done [it,] and by my wisdom; for I am prudent:
and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed
their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a va-
liant [man;] *I have shown my wisdom, strength, and valour, by*
14 *removing the bounds of the people and transplanting colonies.* And
my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as
one gathereth eggs [that are] left, have I gathered all the
earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the
mouth, or peeped; *I have carried away their wealth, as easily as*
a man robs a bird's nest, and they durst not complain. Thus the
great king of Assyria boasted and threatened; we shall now see
15 *what a greater king saith to him.* Shall the ax boast itself against
him that heweth therewith? [or] shall the saw magnify itself
against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake [itself]

against them that lift it up, [or] as if the staff should lift up [itself, as if it were] no wood ; *is not the staff when lifted up wood still ? and shall a dead, lifeless instrument boast itself against him that uses it ? As absurd is it for the king of Assyria to boast*
16 *of what he hath done, when he is but my tool.* Therefore shall the LORD, the LORD of hosts, send among his fat ones, *his chief officers and great men*, leanness ; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire ; *he shall deprive him of his honour and power, and destroy his army, which is his glory.*
17 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame : and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day ; *he who is the support and comfort of Israel, shall be a fire to the Assyrians, and will destroy his army as easily as fire*
18 *burns briars and thorns ;* And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body : and they shall be as when a standard bearer fainteth ; *though he be as strong as the trees in a forest, or as numerous as the cornfields, yet God will consume both soul and body ; the chief commanders and the main body of the army itself shall be totally routed, and the remainder shall be disparited, as the whole army is put into confu-*
19 *sion when a standard bearer fainteth.* And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them ; *there shall be no occasion for a muster master, a child may keep the roll.*
20 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him, *that is, the Assyrian*, that smote them ; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel,
21 in truth, *and not hypocritically.* The remnant shall return,
22 [even] the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, [yet] a remnant of them shall return : the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness ; *though many shall be destroyed by the Assyrians, yet a remnant of the righteous shall be saved ; and all shall be*
23 *done with strict justice.** For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land ; *he hath determined exactly how far it shall extend, and how long it shall continue.*
24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian : he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt ; *he shall do thee some injury and threaten*
25 *more, talk big, like Pharaoh ; but fear not,* For, yet a very little while, and the indignation *against thee* shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction ; *my anger shall show itself in the utter*
26 *destruction of the Assyrians.* And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb : and [as] his rod [was] upon the sea, so

* St. Paul applies this to the Jews, in *Rom.* ix. 27. to prove that it is no new thing for God to abandon many of Abraham's seed, though the promise holds good, there shall still be a remnant.

shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt; *he will bring on their destruction as suddenly, and by as unlikely means, as the destruction of the Midianites and Egyptians. A beautiful contrast; he shall threaten you after the manner of Egypt, and I will smite*
27 *him in the same manner.* And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing; *thou shalt have no fear of his invasions, and pay no more tribute, for the sake of the Messiah.*
28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash
29 he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid;
30 Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gal-
31 lim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee; *denoting the fear, hurry, and confusion of the peo-*
32 *ple, upon the news of his invasion.* As yet shall he remain at Nob that day, *from whence he might see Jerusalem:* he shall shake his hand, *and that shall be all,* [against] the mount of the
33 daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bow with terror: and the high ones of stature [shall be] hewn down, and the haughty shall be hum-
34 bled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one, *that is, the destroying angel; the image is taken from cutting down a forest; the Assyrian army, with their swords, bows, and pikes lifted up, look like a moving forest, but they shall be entirely and irrecoverably cut down.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE greatest kings and most powerful armies are only instruments in God's hand; without him they can do no more than an ax or a saw without a hand to use it. They can do no more than he permits, for *he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this world.* This should dispel all unreasonable fears of our enemies, abate our confidence in our own strength, and engage us to make sure of his friendship and alliance.

2. The counsels of God and those of princes often differ and are contrary; but his shall prevail. The Assyrian came against Judah to conquer and plunder it, and not suspecting that he was then fulfilling the divine design to punish an hypocritical people, and bring them to repentance. Thus our enemies are often performing God's work upon us, without intending it; that is, to humble us for our pride and security, and lead us to seriousness and reformation. What a delightful thought! that the schemes of Providence are carrying on by the sinful passions and pursuits of men, and that *though there be many devices in the heart of man, God's counsel shall stand.*

3. We learn that pride goes before destruction. It is common for proud men to boast what they will do; and, because they have met with some success, to think that they shall carry all before them. So the king of Assyria talked, Have I not conquered this place, and those gods? and shall I not subdue Jerusalem? and be too hard for Jehovah? whom he impiously calls an idol: but he was mistaken. Such language is as ridiculous as for an ax or saw to boast what destruction they have made among the trees. Let us beware of this temper, for we are nothing; it is robbing God of his glory, and provoking him to strip us of all we possess.

4. When God has appeared to defend and succeed his people, it is their duty to return to him and trust in him. This good effect the Assyrian invasion produced; and this is the design of God in sending afflictions upon us. It is comfortable to think that the consumption is determined in righteousness; the consumption of our national numbers, strength or treasures; the consumption of our substance, health or friends; all is particularly determined, when, and how, and to what degree; God is just in all our afflictions, and kind in the measure and duration of them. May they all have this effect, to bring us to *cease from man*, and *stay ourselves upon the holy one of Israel*. But let us see that we do it in truth; and with sincerity; in the use of proper means, to remove every affliction; and in humble dependence on God for a blessing. When we make conscience of our duty to God, and use no sinful means for security, then, and then only, should we have confidence in him.

CHAP. XI.

The prophet having mentioned the deliverance of Judah from the king of Assyria, naturally proceeds to their greater deliverance by the Messiah; as a descendant of David, on whom the Spirit would rest, in whose days peace should be propagated, Israel and Judah return to their own land, be united, and made victorious.

1 AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; *a reference to the foregoing verses; there shall come a tender shoot out of a stock that has long lain in the ground, that is the family of David, then*
2 *sunk into meanness and obscurity:* And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, *in divine and natural things*, the spirit of counsel and might, *to advise, contrive, and execute*, the spirit of knowledge, *in the divine law*, and of the fear of the LORD, *of true religion; he shall not*
3 *only inculcate it, but be an eminent example of it;* And *this spirit* shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD; *he shall be eminent for all branches of wisdom and godliness, and know the real characters of men:* and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears,

4 *that is, upon uncertain reports:* But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; *he shall defend the poor, and condemn their oppressors:* and he shall smite the earth with the rod, *or sword,* of his mouth,
5 and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.* And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; *he shall have a strict regard to justice and*
6 *integrity, which, like a girdle, adorn and defend a person.* The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fat-
7 ling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together:
8 and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den; *a beautiful image, especially as those countries abounded with wild beasts and serpents: the meaning is, that Jews and Gentiles should be united, the irregular tempers of men corrected, so that the mischievous should become innocent*
9 *and useful, and a peaceable disposition universally prevail.* They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; *(a proof that the above expressions are all figurative:)* for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea; *knowledge and holiness shall be promoted, and the effect shall be meekness, peace, and love. The remainder of the chapter refers to the conversion of the Jews in the latter day.*

10 And in that day there shall be a *branch out of the* root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, *to gather them together,* (*Rom.* xv. 12.) to it shall the gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious, *that is, the church, where he rests and dwells,*
11 *shall be glorious by the accession of the gentiles.* And it shall come to pass in that day, *in the illustrious time I am speaking of,* [that] the LORD shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, *as he did first out of Babylon,* which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea, *that is, all countries on the sea coast as well as islands, and refers to these western*
12 *parts of the world.* And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, *that is, the doctrine of the gospel,* and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah
13 from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim,
14 *they shall cease from open hostilities and secret animosities.* But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them; *these being the ancient enemies of Israel, are put*

* This is applied to antichrist, *Rev.* xix. 15. *The Lord shall destroy him.*

figuratively for the enemies of the christian church; and the passage intimates, that the converted Jews shall triumph over all that oppose
15 *their return to their own land.* And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue, *or bay,* of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make [men] go over dry shod; *he shall overcome all opposition in their way, as he divided*
16 *the Red sea for Israel to go out of Egypt.** And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt; *there shall be a free passage, and all difficulties shall be removed which hinder their return.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE extraordinary endowments of Christ, as a teacher and king, render him worthy of the highest regard. He was gloriously qualified for his work by the spirit which was given him without measure, *He had all treasures of wisdom and knowledge,* for his own use, and to bestow on his people. Meekness and courage, wisdom and strength, justice and gentleness, were united in him. Happy are the subjects of such a prince, the disciples of such a teacher! And blessed be God for his high exaltation and glorious qualifications; so that in him we may safely trust. And O that his churches every where may be glorious, by the supply of the spirit which is in Christ!

2. How solicitous should we be to answer the design of his gospel, and to have these illustrious prophecies of its good effects fulfilled in us. Let us make it appear that we are christians indeed, by the peaceableness and gentleness of our disposition, the softness and sweetness of our tempers! Let nothing malicious, revengeful, sour, contentious, or unkind, be ever found in us. Let us cultivate peace; labour to promote each other's happiness; and in this, *follow on to know the Lord;* and by increasing in our acquaintance with him, who is love, *be conformed to his image,* and *walk in love, even as Christ hath loved us.*

3. Let us rejoice in the prospect of that day, when christianity shall have a more illustrious triumph, and Jews and Gentiles be gathered into his church. It is delightful to think, when we hear of the poor Jews dispersed and evil entreated every where, that there is mercy in store for them; that they shall at length become christians, and be as much esteemed and beloved as they are now hated and despised. Many signs and wonders will introduce and attend this great event. God will overcome all difficulties which lie in the way, and in the mean time, *our heart's desire and prayer for Israel* should be *that they may be saved.*

* This is expressed in *Rev.* xvi 12. by drying up Euphrates.

CHAP. XII.

The conclusion of the former chapter referred to the glory of the latter day, when Jews and Gentiles shall be gathered into the church, its enemies be destroyed, and peace restored; this chapter is a thanksgiving which they are directed to use at that time; it represents to them what sentiments they should entertain, and how they should express them. It consists of two parts; in the first three verses there is a call to God's people to stir up themselves to the work of praise; in the other three verses they are directed to stir up one another, and endeavour to engage all about them to join in it.

1 AND in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise
thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is
turned away, and thou comfortedst me; *though thou didst punish and disperse thy people, the tokens of thine anger are now removed, and their blessings restored; thou hast given them cause*
2 *and hearts to praise thee.* Behold, *observe it as a great, wonderful, and unexpected event,* God [is] my salvation; *he hath brought salvation suited to our circumstances, and every way worthy of God;* I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH, *the eternal and unchangeable God, the author and giver of all our strength,* [is] my strength and [my] song, *that is, the subject matter of my song;* he also is become my salvation; *he hath manifested himself as our saviour in the most remarkable manner,*
3 *and shall have all the glory.* Therefore, *as the consequence of God's kind interposition,* with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation; *ye shall have abundance of divine joy and comfort in attending upon ordinances, to which ye shall be restored and admitted; springs of salvation shall then break up, and ye shall re-*
4 *ceive refreshment with unutterable joy.** And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted;
ye shall not only praise him yourselves, but tell the world what he
5 *has done for you, and record it for the benefit of posterity.* Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this [is] known in all the earth; *the blessings he hath bestowed are truly valuable, are not confined to the Jews, but extend over the whole*
6 *earth.* Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; *use the strongest expressions and demonstrations of thankfulness and joy:* for great [is] the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee; *he hath manifested his greatness in thy deliverance, and his holiness too; his faithfulness to his promise and covenant; and he is still in the midst of thee, to defend thee from danger, secure thy privileges and prolong thy peace.*

* Here is an allusion to the state of Israel in the wilderness; when thirsty and ready to perish, God caused springs to rise up for them; and they received the water with joy and singing. Religious ordinances and communications of the spirit, are often represented under this image.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are led from hence to ascribe the praise of all our peace and comfort, to God. Whatever deliverances we have, whatever comforts have been restored, or continued, all is owing to the care and favour of Jehovah. Let us cherish a grateful temper; sing praises to him with our voice; and not be low, dull, and lifeless in this most reasonable and delightful work.

2. The people of God should heartily join in presenting their public thanks to him. Every one should say this for himself, and say it together, that *God is our strength and salvation*; especially is he so in our redemption through Christ Jesus, that great salvation *to which all the prophets bore witness*. Let us be thankful, that it is an extensive as well as a glorious salvation; that it is known through all the earth. Let us speak of it one to another, and mention it to our children, that they also may thank God for his unspeakable gift.

3. Divine ordinances should be attended with pleasure. Those wells of salvation are opened to us; there is no enemy to stop them or divert their course; and we ought to come to them with as much relish as a thirsty, perishing traveller would come to a spring of water. Here we may drink, not only for our present refreshment, but to gain strength for the discharge of all the duties of life. How ungrateful to God is it to say, *What a weariness is it!* He expects that we be joyful in his house of prayer; he hath done every thing to make us so, and he loveth a cheerful worshipper.

4. Former experiences of God's goodness are an encouragement to trust in him. He has often been our salvation, when we have been in imminent danger; hath given us his Son to be our saviour: and the Holy One of Israel is still in the midst of us, to guard his churches, and secure the happiness of all his people. And while we praise him for past favours, let us further call upon his name, and commit all our concerns to his good providence, for thus he commands us, *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make known your requests unto God.*

CHAP. XIII.

The prophet proceeds to foretell the calamities of the neighbouring nations, particularly those that Israel was some way or other concerned with; and begins with Babylon, that would be a cruel oppressor to them.

1 THE burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz
2 did see.* Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, *to gather the soldiers together*, exalt the voice unto them, *as they*

* A burden signifies in general, a weighty, important matter; but sometimes, as here, a burdensome prophecy, that foretells the ruin of a country. It was near two hundred years after this, that Babylon was taken by Cyrus; its ruin, and that entire desolation which this chapter describes, was an event utterly beyond all human foresight, and exceedingly improbable to be conjectured.

do that would enlist them, shake the hand, *beckon with the hand for them to come*, that they may go into the gates of the nobles ; *that they may enlist under great officers ; or it may refer to the*
3 *seizing of Babylon, and plundering its palaces.* I have commanded my sanctified ones, *those whom I have called, separated, and prepared for the service*, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, [even] them that rejoice in my highness ; *who shall cheerfully execute those commands which display my great-*
4 *ness and glory, though they do not consider it as such.* The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people ; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together, *crowding together to my standard ;* the LORD of hosts muster-
5 eth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, [even] the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land ; *referring to the troops of Media and Persia, and the auxiliaries Cyrus had from many other nations ; all regular and well disciplined soldiers, and God's instruments to destroy the whole land of Chaldea.*
6 Howl ye ; for the day of the LORD [is] at hand ; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty, *and as such shall be*
7 *irresistible.* Therefore shall all hands be faint, *not able to hold their weapons*, and every man's heart shall melt *with fear, so*
8 *that he shall have no spirit to resist.* And they shall be afraid : pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them ; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth : they shall be amazed one at another, *thinking the city impregnable ; and when it is taken, spreading consternation from one to another ;* their faces [shall be
9 as] flames, *black and ghastly, as when scorched by the flames.* Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate : and he shall destroy the sinners, *the idolatrous, cruel, and luxurious inhabitants* thereof out
10 of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light ; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine ; *a common description in the prophets of the removal of every thing that gives comfort and encouragement to a nation ; and here, of the universal gloom and melancholy that should spread over the land of*
11 *Chaldea.* And I will punish the world, *or the kingdom of Babylon*, for [their] evil, and the wicked for their iniquity ; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the
12 haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man, *that is, a common man*, more precious than fine gold ; even a man, *that is, a gallant man*, than the golden wedge of Ophir. *An elegant and beautiful description ! There shall hardly be a man to be found, such havock shall be made of them ; they shall be so scarce, that*
13 *they cannot be hired for any money.* Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger ; *such shall be their terror and confusion, as if the heavens and earth*
14 *were jumbled together.* And it shall be as the chased roe, and

as a sheep that no man taketh up ; *those that used to be like roaring lions and ranging bears, shall be fearful and weak, like a roe or a sheep :* they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land ; *all their allies shall desert*
15 *them.* Every one that is found shall be thrust through ; and every one that is joined [unto them] shall fall by the sword.
16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes ; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished ; *thus cruelly they will use the Jews, (Zech.* xiv. 2.) *and thus shall they be treated. The instruments of this desolation are then mentioned.*
17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver ? and [as for] gold, they shall not delight in it ;
18 *they shall act as if they only thirsted for blood.** [Their] bows also shall dash the young men to pieces ; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb ; their eye shall not spare
19 children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sod-
20 om and Gomorrah, *that is, shall be entirely destroyed.* It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation : neither shall the Arabian† pitch tent there ;
21 neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs
22 shall dance there.‡ And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses and dragons in [their] pleasant palaces : and her time [is] near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged *beyond her set time ; denoting the certainty of the things described, as well as their being near.*‖

REFLECTIONS.

For a fast day.

1 OBSERVE and adore the power of God over all the hosts of the earth. What a sublime description is here given of the universal agency of God ! particularly of the use he makes of the contrivances and force of men. He, the Lord of hosts, mustereth the hosts of the battle ; he gathers them together, reviews them, and arms them. Their weapons are the weapons of his indignation, and he gives them success. He can easily take away the strength of their opponents to resist, and their courage to en-

* This is a remarkable and most wonderful prediction ; for at the time when Isaiah prophesied there was no kingdom of the Medes, they were subject to the king of Assyria ; but about nineteen years after this they revolted, set up a kingdom of their own, and became so powerful, that, in conjunction with the Persians, they destroyed Babylon.

† A wandering people, that carried their tents and cattle from place to place, where they could find most convenient food for them.

‡ What these creatures were, the learned have not agreed ; but they were such that loved to dwell in desolate and ruined places.

‖ As the walls of Babylon were not entirely demolished, the Persian king made it a park for wild beasts ; but afterwards it was deserted ; and many travellers tell us that no one went near the ruins, on account of the wild beasts and serpents that abounded there, and that there are scarce any remains of it now to be seen.

dure ; he can make their hands faint, and their hearts melt. It is a delightful thought, that all the hosts of the world are under the sovereign command of the Lord of hosts. This shows the propriety of acknowledging him, and imploring his favour in time of war. It should be our earnest desire, that our soldiers may be sanctified ones, in the best sense of the word ; devoted to his fear and service ; that they may rejoice in his highness, and go forth in his strength to the service for which they are called ; and seek his glory in all they do.

2. The fall of Babylon, and its utter desolation, should be a warning to all nations. So Providence undoubtedly intended them to be. When we consider it as the greatest and most powerful monarchy in the world ; the extent, strength, wealth, and grandeur of its capital ; what little probability there was that it should ever be taken ; and especially that it was predicted, so long before the event, that it should be utterly destroyed and left desolate ; who would not adore that spirit of prophecy which foretold it, and be afraid of the anger of the almighty power that executed the vengeance ! What an awful description of that anger have we been now considering ! O may Britain hear and fear ! she is, in the most important respects, the glory of kingdoms, but is not secure from sharing the fate of former kingdoms ; justly therefore may we tremble for ourselves and our country. Let us learn to *fear the King of nations, who doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth*, and implore mercy for our land. And in order to obtain this, let us

3. Observe the sources of Babylon's ruin, and learn righteousness by it. The ruin of Babylon was occasioned by its iniquities, its idolatry, cruelty, luxury, and love of pleasure, these sins abounded among them, but their arrogance, pride, and haughtiness, are what the principal stress is laid upon in this chapter, they were conceited of their own politics, wealth, power, and strength, *v.* 11. Hence they thought themselves secure, despised their enemies, and set all danger, and even the judgments of God, at defiance. But there is no contending with the Almighty ; and *those that deal in pride he is able* and he takes pleasure *to abase*. Let us then be warned against confidence in our wisdom, strength, and military force, and fix our dependence on God. National humiliations and prayers are exceeding proper and useful, as they tend to abate our pride, and our trust in an arm of flesh, and to convince us that all our strength and sufficiency is of God. If we thus humble ourselves under his mighty hand, we may cheerfully hope that in due time he will exalt us. But the nation or individual that exalts itself, shall in God's time and way be abased and brought low.

CHAP. XIV. 1—27.

The prophet here foretells the restoration of Israel, and their triumph over Babylon.

1 FOR the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet
choose Israel, *return to them in mercy*, and set them in their
own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and
they shall cleave to the house of Jacob; *many Chaldeans and*
captives, with the Jews in Babylon, shall become proselytes and re-
2 *turn with them to their land.* And the people shall take them,
and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall
possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and hand-
maids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they
were; and they shall rule over their oppressors; *they shall use*
their assistance as they have occasion for it, and receive services
3 *from those to whom they had been slaves.* And it shall come to
pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sor-
row, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein
4 thou wast made to serve, That thou shalt take up this proverb,
this acute and excellent saying, against the king of Babylon, and
say, *in these sublime and lofty strains*, How hath the oppressor
ceased! the golden city ceased! *how was it possible that such*
5 *a thing should ever be brought about!* The LORD hath broken
the staff of the wicked [and] the sceptre of the rulers; *it is*
6 *God's doing, and therefore wonder not at it.* He who smote the
people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the na-
tions in anger, *who was a most barbarous and ungenerous con-*
queror, he is persecuted, [and] none hindereth; *neither his own*
7 *people nor his allies could help him.* The whole earth is at rest,
[and] is quiet, *now its greatest oppressor is ceased, now Babylon*
8 *is destroyed:* they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees
rejoice at thee, [and] the cedars of Lebanon, [saying,] Since
thou art laid down no feller is come up against us; *the great and*
9 *the common people rejoice, over whom he had tyrannized.* Hell from
beneath is moved for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stir-
reth up the dead for thee, [even] all the chief ones of the earth;
it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations;
the invisible world is roused to make way for so great a monarch;
the kings that used to be afraid of thee, and were tributary to thee,
10 *rise up by way of scorn and insult.* All they shall speak and say
unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become
11 like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, [and]
the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the
worms cover thee, *instead of thy rich garments and sumptuous*
12 *carpets.* How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the
morning; *thou who excelledst other princes in glory, as much as*
the morning star does the other stars in lustre: [how] art thou
13 cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For
thou hadst said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will

exalt my throne above the stars, *or angels*, of God; *an hyperbole, to express his great pride, or that he really expected divine honours:* I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; *I will place my royal throne upon mount*
14 *Zion, and in the temple at Jerusalem:* *yea*, I will ascend above
15 the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High. Yet
16 thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, [and] consider thee, [saying, Is] this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; *they shall be astonished at thy fall, and look attentively before they can believe it is thou that art fallen so*
17 *low;* [That] made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; [that] opened not the house of his prisoners? *intimating both his power and cruelty, he granted them no release:*
18 All the kings of the nations, [even] all of them lie in glory, every one in his own house, *or sepulchre; they were buried with marks*
19 *of honour and distinction:* But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *like some noisome plant, that lies rotting above ground*, [and as] the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, *the raiment of a malefactor besmeared with blood and dirt*, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet; *like a putrifying carcass, which is suffered to lie a while unburied, and then is thrown into some quarry or pit, which probably was the case with Belshazzar's*
20 *body.* Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, *that is, with thine ancestors in an honourable burial*, because thou hast destroyed thy land, [and] slain thy people; *destroyed thy subjects, and brought ruin upon thy land:* the seed of evil doers shall never, *or not ever*, be renowned. *And because he has been so notorious a*
21 *transgressor, therefore* Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; *who tread in the cruel steps of their ancestors;* that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities; *that they may not recover their*
22 *former flourishing condition.** For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD; *all the posterity*
23 *and kindred of the King of Babylon.* I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water:† and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts. *A noble, though beautiful image; intimating the vile nature of sin, the total extirpation of that wicked people, and the perfect ease with which the righteous God would execute his intended vengeance. Then comes a prophecy of the speedy destruction of the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time, which was designed to confirm their faith in this prophecy of the fall of Babylon.*

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, [so]

* Belshazzar's children and family were probably slain with him.

† This prophecy was exactly accomplished, for Cyrus took Babylon by turning the channel of the river Euphrates that ran through it, and by neglecting to repair the banks, the river overflowed the country about it, and it became, and now is, a filthy, noisome marsh.

shall it stand; *and therefore let not my people doubt of it, though*
25 *it seem ever so incredible:* That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; *the army of Sennacherib, as a pledge of the full destruction of Babylon:* then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from
26 off their shoulders. This [is] the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this [is] the hand that is stretched
27 out upon all the nations *that rise up against Israel.* For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul [it?] and his hand [is] stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT should be the desire and care of God's people to spread the knowledge of their religion, and their pleasure, to see others embrace it. It is mentioned as an instance of God's goodness to the Jews, that many of their enemies should become proselytes to their religion, and return with them in order to worship their God. His appearances for them, and their good behaviour, gained upon their enemies, and induced them to return with them. Thus should it be our care to behave in so holy, just, and friendly a manner, *that others seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven.* It should be our ambition to see the church enlarged; pious strangers should cheerfully be received into it; and it should be our peculiar care that our servants should possess the best blessings, and learn wisdom and goodness from our admonition and example.

2. This sublime parable, concerning the king of Babylon, intimates to us, that there is a world of spirits, in which they know and converse with each other. These poetical flights are grounded on that truth, that there is an invisible world, into which human souls are removed, princes and kings as well as others, and that they have acquaintance and converse with each other. It may also intimate to us, that the inhabitants of hell have no reverence for the former greatness, wealth, dignity, and authority of their fellow sufferers, nor any fear of their power; that there is no distance kept, no distinction made, nor deference paid in that place of torments; that the cutting sneers and keen railleries of those whom they tyrannized over here, will be a considerable torment to the great and proud. Let this thought excite us to *fly from the wrath to come,* and secure a mansion among the blessed; to do all the good we can to others, that they may receive us into the everlasting habitations, and we for ever enjoy their thanks and friendship for the services we have done them.

3. Let God's great and just indignation against tyrants, as here particularly specified, caution us against every degree of cruelty and oppression. There are many petty tyrants among christians, who oppress all under their power, and would be as bad as the king of Babylon, had they equal authority and opportunity. They distress their servants, workmen, tenants, and dependants, to gratify

their cruelty or spleen: and will not do to others as they desire and expect to be done by. God will reckon with such men at last, and judge them as oppressors. They think by these means to increase the fortunes of their children, but are generally disappointed, for *the seed of evil doers shall never be renowned.* Let us fly from all these detestable practices, be strictly just to the rights of others, tender of their ease and comfort, and ready to give up some of our due for their relief and benefit. Let us be *rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

CHAP. XIV. 28, to the end. CHAP. XV. XVI.

The fifteenth chapter refers to the calamities brought upon Moab, soon after the destruction of the Assyrian army, because during the distress of Judah, they did not give them any help, as is intimated in the next chapter. It was probably delivered in the first and executed in the fourth year of Hezekiah. When Shalmaneser invaded the kingdom of Israel, he might march through Moab, and take their principal cities, Ar and Kir.

28 IN the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. Rejoice not
29 thou, whole Palestina, *or land of the Philistines*, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken; *referring to their rejoicing on the death of Ahaz, whose father Uzziah had been a dreadful scourge to them:* for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, *or adder*, and his fruit [shall be] a fiery flying serpent; *the king who shall succeed him, shall sting them worse than his grandfather did, which history tells us that he did, 2 Kings*
30 xviii. 8. And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant; *Hezekiah shall be mild and just to his subjects, and they shall enjoy plenty in his reign; while the Philistines shall have famine and war, by which they shall*
31 *be destroyed.* Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, [art] dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, *that is, a fire from Judea to destroy thee*, and none [shall be] alone in his appointed times; *the Jews shall go willingly to*
32 *attack thee, and none shall desert or be missing.* What shall [one] then answer the messengers of the nation, *who shall come to congratulate Hezekiah's success?* That the LORD hath founded Zion, *and dwells there by his extraordinary presence*, and the poor of his people shall trust in it; *those that were despised shall betake themselves to it, and find security.*

1 CHAP. XV. The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, [and] brought to silence, *or cut off;* because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, [and] brought to
2 silence, *suddenly and unexpectedly:* He, *that is, Moab*, is gone

up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep, *and call upon his gods:* Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads [shall be] baldness, [and] every beard cut off,
3 *in token of mourning.* In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their
4 streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly. And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard [even] unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him; *even the soldiers shall be quite dispirited, perceiving the most dreadful calamities coming*
5 *upon them.* My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives [shall flee] unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old; *or rather, my heart shall cry unto Zoar, like a heifer lowing after her calf:* for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim, they shall raise up a cry
6 of destruction; *it shall be an universal lamentation.* For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing; *the country shall*
7 *be depopulated and ruined by the army.* Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows; *their enemies shall*
8 *plunder and carry away all their wealth.* For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto
9 Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim. For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon *than has been already mentioned,* lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land; *great multitudes shall be slain, and those who flee and those who are left in the land, shall be slain by lions and other savage beasts.*

1 CHAP. XVI. Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion;
send the tribute due to the kings of Judah, from all parts of your
2 *country, to Jerusalem, where the king's palace is.** For, *or else,* it shall be, [that,] as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, [so] the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon; *her children shall be turned out of their habitations, and shall not know*
3 *where to fly.* Take counsel, *how the ruin may be prevented,* execute judgment, *do justice to my people;* make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noon day; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth; *shelter them under their sufferings, and*
4 *do not betray them to their enemies.* Let mine outcasts, *those that flee from the Assyrian invasion,* dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, *that is, shall quickly be so,* the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. *This is probably ironical; as if he had said, Thus you should have done, but, thanks be to God, now we have no occasion for such an instance of your kind-*
5 *ness.* And in mercy shall the throne *of Hezekiah* be establish-

* David had conquered the Moabites, and made them tributaries, and the tribute was paid in sheep; but this they had neglected to send for some time, 2 *Kings* iii. 4.

ed: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting *to execute* righteousness.

6 We have heard of the pride of Moab; *all his neighbours know it;* [he is] very proud: [even] of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: [but] his lies [shall] not [be] so; *his strength and power are not equal to his pride, he is deceived in them.*

7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirhareseth shall ye mourn; surely

8 [they are] stricken. For the fields of Heshbon languish, [and] the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen, *the Assyrian officers,* have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come [even] unto Jazer, they wandered [through] the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea; *their fruitful country is wasted, so that they are obliged to*

9 *flee.* Therefore I will bewail thee with the weeping of Jazer, *or, with weeping bewail Jazer;* the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting

10 for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in [their] presses; I have made [their vintage] shouting to cease; *there shall be no more shouting and joy in harvest, or the vintage, because all*

11 *shall be laid waste.* Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh: *the prophet himself was deeply impressed with the prospect of their*

12 *calamities.* And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; *he shall first try his high places, then come to the temple*

13 *of Chemosh, his god, to pray;* but he shall not prevail. This [is] the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since

14 that time. But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, *that is, three exact years,* and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; *their riches shall be lost, and their multitudes become contemptible:* and the remnant [shall be] very small [and] feeble.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE dealings of God with the nations of the earth, are designed for the establishment of the church. This was the pious answer Hezekiah and his people were to make to those who came to congratulate him on his success. God is still carrying on this as his grand scheme; and, though we may not particularly see

* God had long ago determined on their destruction, but now, as their wickedness was increased, he fixed the time for it. Whether this prophecy was sent to Moab, or not, is uncertain: it probably might be so, and it would serve to confirm the Israelites in the belief of the divine foreknowledge and Providence, and strengthen their faith in the prophecies relating to themselves.

how the means conduce to the end, the thought is very encouraging. And since God has such a regard to his church, and it is so firmly fixed, it is our wisdom to betake ourselves to it, to trust in it, and rejoice in its security amidst all the attempts of its enemies.

2. We are taught from the idolatrous Moabites to make prayer our refuge in the time of trouble. It is natural in distress for *every man to cry unto his god.* They cried to their idol gods; went up to their high places; wept and mourned there; and when one god would not answer, they tried another. How wretched is the case of idolaters! how happy the people, whose God is the Lord! to whom they can go at all times, assured that their prayers will not be in vain.

3. We should lament the horrible desolations that war makes in the earth. What a dreadful description is here of the misery of Moab, from the incursions, ravages, and plunders of their enemies. The lords of the heathens devoured or carried away every thing. How should we pity our enemies, or our unkind and wicked neighbours, when they suffer such a calamity. Let us think tenderly of them; and for their sakes, as well as our own, and our allies, earnestly pray that war may cease. The servants of God, especially his prophets, should imitate the humanity and compassion of Isaiah, who speaks so feelingly of the distress of the enemies of God and Israel.

4. Let us learn to cultivate a readiness to help and relieve others in distress, whatever their character or behaviour to us has been. Whether we understand the prophet's advice to Moab as serious or ironical, it naturally suggests to us that we should help our fellow creatures under their sufferings, relieve the outcasts, shelter the oppressed from the cruelty of their oppressors, labour to promote justice, and show humanity and kindness to them that are in trouble; then we may expect the same assistance should we be in like distress; and especially may we hope for the support and consolations of Christ, who *sits upon his throne, judging righteously. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

5. We see how uncertain the possessions of this world are, which should lead us not to set our hearts upon them. What the Moabites had gotten and laid up, their enemies carried away. Riches expose men to plunder and rapine, and thus often take away the lives of the owners thereof. Joy may soon cease out of the field; and those who have no better or higher joy than such as the increase of wealth, corn and wine, and oil affords, will then be very miserable. But there is a treasure that cannot be taken away, a joy that cannot be lost, a treasure laid up in heaven, *where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal;* a joy that springs from the light of God's countenance, *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* This we should be chiefly concerned to secure. Let the language of our souls be, *Lord, lift up upon us the light of thy countenance;* and then, *though the fig tree does not blossom, though there be no fruit on the vine, or calves in the stall, we may joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of our salvation.*

CHAP. XVII, XVIII.

As Syria and Israel had been confederates against Judah, the destruction of both of them is here foretold.

1 THE burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is, *or shall be*, taken away from [being] a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap; *it was soon after made so by the king of Assyria, see* 2 *Kings* xvi. 9. The cities of Aroer [are] forsaken; *the province of Syria shall be utterly desolate:* they shall be for flocks which
3 shall lie down, and none shall make [them] afraid. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria, *which shall be no longer a kingdom, but a province to Assyria:* they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts; *they shall share in a com-*
4 *mon destruction.* And in that day it shall come to pass, [that] the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean; *shall be wasted away, like a man in a consumption.*
5 And it shall be as when the harvest man gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim, *a fruitful valley near Jerusalem: he shall make clear riddance, so that none shall be left; the Israelites shall be carried into captivity by the Assyrians,* (2 *Kings* xv. 29. xvii. 6.) *with as much ease as a field of corn is*
6 *reaped and carried in.* Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, *(the image of the harvest is still carried on,)* as the shaking of an olive tree, two [or] three berries in the top of the uttermost bough, *which were out of reach,* four [or] five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord GOD of Israel; *a small*
7 *remnant shall be reformed, and saved, and return to Judah.* At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel, *and shall worship and serve*
8 *him.* And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect [that] which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images; *he shall no more trust in idols, or im-*
9 *ages in groves.* In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch,* which they left because of the children of Israel; *like the cities which they, that is, the Canaanites, left to Israel:* and there shall be desolation; *as the land cast them out, so it shall Israel; or, as the Canaanites forsook their cities for fear of the children of Israel, when they came to possess the land, so they shall be forsaken again now for fear of*
10 *the Assyrians.* Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with
11 strange slips: In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish; [but] the harvest [shall be] a heap in the day of grief and of desperate

* The Seventy render it, *As the Hivites and Amorites.*

sorrow ; *they shall be greatly disappointed in their most sanguine expectations, as the husbandman, when, after great pains, the harvest is ruined. We have then a prophecy of the destruction of the Assyrian army, to the end of the next chapter.*

12 Wo to the multitude of many people, *to the many allies and auxiliaries of the Assyrians,* [which] make a noise like the noise of the seas ; and to the rushing of nations, [that] make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters ! *who come violently, as if*
13 *they would destroy my people at once.* The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters ; but [God,] *who is able to do it, but whom they do not think of,* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
14 And behold at evening tide trouble ; [and] before the morning he [is] not ; *referring to the destruction of the Assyrians in one night.* This [is] the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us ; *of other enemies as well as those.*

1 CHAP. XVIII.* Wo to the land shadowing with wings, *that stretches out its long wings or armies,* which [is] beyond the
2 rivers of Ethiopia, *or, which passes to the river of Ethiopia.* That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, *as well as by land,* even in vessels of bulrushes, *or reeds,* upon the waters, [saying,] Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, *thus scornfully and contemptuously shall they speak of the Jews,* to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers, *that is, the Assyrians, (ch.*
3 xvii. 12.) have spoiled ! All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains ; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye ; *observe the prediction and the accomplishment ; see what God will do.*
4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place, *or, regard my set dwelling place,* like a clear heat upon herbs, [and] like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest ; *though I seem to be asleep and unconcerned, yet I will defend my dwelling place, will make it a safe and delightful*
5 *repose, and continually watch over it.* For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away [and] cut down the branches ; *when their schemes are ripening, and they think themselves sure of success, the Assyrians shall*
6 *be utterly destroyed.* They, *that is, all the enemies of God's people,* shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth : and the fowls shall summer upon them,
7 and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them. In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ; a nation meted out and trodden under

* The learned are much divided in opinion who this chapter refers to. Some think the Egyptians; others, Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia or Arabia, who came to help the Israelites against the Assyrians, but were destroyed by them. I rather think it refers to the Assyrians.

foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion. *Here the prophet retorts upon the Assyrians: ambassadors shall be sent to congratulate Hezekiah on the destruction of their army; presents shall be sent from Egypt and Ethiopia, whom the Assyrians had conquered, to the mount Zion: or it may mean, that the plunder of the Assyrian camp should be brought there.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is very happy when affliction promotes reformation. The Israelites had forsaken God, therefore he brought the Assyrians upon them. Some, foreseeing the trouble, repented and returned to God, and put away their idols. Providence intends, by national and personal troubles and dangers, to cure us of sin, of spiritual idolatry, of the love of money, of pleasure, and of trusting in man. They are designed to bring us to look to our Maker, the Holy One of Israel; to acknowledge his providence; to humble ourselves before him and pray to him: and it is a merciful affliction that brings us to this; then shall we become objects of the divine care and favour, and he will provide for our security and happiness. Though there be but few of this character, they shall not be lost, but be *as a brand plucked out of the burning*.

2. We here see the source of sin and misery: it is forgetting God, being unmindful of him as our strong defence, and the author of all our mercies and deliverances; and the consequence will be, disappointment where we most expected comfort and relief. Let us beware then *lest we forget the Lord our God*. To be continually mindful of him is a most important duty; it is the support of all other duties, and will be the source of serenity and joy amidst all the changes of this mortal life.

3. Let us not think God has forsaken his church, though he may sometimes suffer it to be in adversity and danger; though he seems to say, *I will take my rest*, and appears like one asleep, or as an unconcerned spectator. Let us not entertain the thought that he is so because he does not immediately appear; he will regard his dwelling place, take care of his own interest, and his people shall find a safe and delightful repose in him. Let us never indulge unbelieving fears and suspicions, for *the Lord is a God of judgment*; his church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. One or another of its strongest earthly pillars may fall, but God will raise up others, and add to the church daily of such as shall be saved.

CHAP. XIX.

This chapter refers to the calamities brought upon the Egyptians by intestine commotions. The Israelites were fond of an alliance with them, therefore their distress and inability to help their allies is here foretold; but it is difficult to determine to what period of their history this prophecy refers.

1 THE burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, *as a judge*, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, *shall be carried captive, and not be able to help their worshippers*, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it, *the people shall lose*
2 *all their courage*. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, [and]
3 kingdom against kingdom.* And the spirit of Egypt, *that is, their courage and wisdom, for both of which they were famous*, shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to
4 them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of
5 hosts.† And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up, *that is, the Nile which they worshipped, and on the rising of which in spring, and overflowing their land,*
6 *their harvest depended, as they had little or no rain*. And they shall turn the rivers far away; [and] the brooks of defence shall
7 be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither. The paper reeds‡ by the brooks, by the mouth, *or side*, of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven
8 away, and be no [more.] The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish: *Egypt was famous for fish, and its inhabitants lived much upon it, as they scrupled to*
9 *kill many animals for food*. Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net works, shall be confounded: *it was also famous for flax and fine linen, for which Solomon traded with the*
10 *Egyptians*. And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices [and] ponds for fish; *that is, they that were used to get their living by keeping fish in ponds, shall fail of their gain that way; all which intimates a general decay of trade and*
11 *prosperity*. Surely the princes of Zoan, *that most ancient city*,

* After the death of Sathon there were two years anarchy; then twelve persons seized the kingdom, and divided it among themselves. At length Psammetichus, one of the twelve, by the help of the Greeks drove out the other eleven, and reigned alone.

† This is understood of different persons, but is generally supposed to refer to Psammetichus.

‡ This was the papyrus, a large reed that grew on the banks of their river and brooks, the broad leaves of which the Egyptians wrote upon, as we do on paper, which from hence took its name.

(*Numb.* xiii. 22.) [are] fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I
12 [am] the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?* Where [are] they? where [are] thy wise [men?] *thy politicians and astrologers?* and let them tell thee now, and let them know what
13 the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt. The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph, *or Memphis, another ancient city*, are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, [even they that are] the stay of the tribes thereof; *the governors, who*
14 *are the corners or support of it.* The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken [man] staggereth in his vomit; *they shall be unsettled in their councils, and follow*
15 *those that are most mischievous.* Neither shall there be [any] work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do;
their trade shall be lost, and there shall be no work for the high or
16 *the low, they shall have no means to help themselves.* In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which shaketh over it; *that is, the threatenings he denounces, and the*
17 *judgments he is bringing upon them.* And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.†
18 In that day shall five, *that is, many*, cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts, *engage themselves by covenant to become subject to them*; one shall be called, The city of destruction; *of Heres, or the sun,*
19 *that is, Heliopolis.*‡ In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD; *the worship of God shall be set up there; and gospel worship is often described by expressions taken from the Jewish worship: a pillar shall be set up to let every one know at*
20 *their first entrance what religion they are of.* And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour and a great one, and
21 he shall deliver them.‖ And the LORD shall be known to Egypt,

* The Egyptians pretended to extraordinary antiquity, and traced up the lists of their kings higher than any other nation, quite to Ham.

† This probably refers to their apprehension of danger when Sennacherib destroyed the fenced cities of Judah, before he besieged Jerusalem; though others refer it to the long siege of Ashdod by Psammetichus, which stopped the course of his victories, and gave him great vexation. These are various opinions among the learned what the next verse refers to: some say, to the conversion of many of the Egyptians to the religion of the Jews, by their settlement among them; but it more probably refers to their conversion by the gospel.

‡ After the siege abovementioned, the learned say there was an alliance between Egypt, Assyria, and Judah; and the Jews had actually five cities in the land, where they were allowed the free exercise of their religion. But that this was fact is not sufficiently evident; and I rather prefer the former interpretation.

‖ Dr. Newton understands this of Alexander the Great, whose successor was Ptolemy the Great, and Soter, or saviour, probably in reference to Christ. Alexander favoured the Jews, settled many in Egypt, allowed them to be governed by their own laws and customs; and there the Greek translation of the Bible, called the Septuagint, is generally supposed to have been made.

and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform [it;] *they shall have the means of knowledge*
22 *and improve them.* And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal [it:] and they shall return [even] to the LORD, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them; *their afflictions shall do them good, and dispose them to receive the gos-*
23 *pel.* In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians; *though Egypt was the house of their bondage, and the Assyrians the invaders of Judah, yet their enmity shall cease, and they*
24 *shall join in serving the Lord.* In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria; *the land of Israel which is between Egypt and Assyria, shall be the centre of union to the three nations which had been so often at variance,* [even] a blessing in the midst of the land, *or, of the earth, as from thence the gospel*
25 *shall spread:* Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance. *God will join them all in his blessing; he will make them a blessing to all about them; they shall be all alike in covenant with him. Accordingly the gospel was early planted among them, and many flourishing christian churches were there.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. OBSERVE how easily God can throw a populous and flourishing nation into confusion and misery; set the people one against the other, and raise a perverse spirit in the midst thereof; infatuate the wisest counsellors, and strike a panic and terror through all. He can by this means destroy their trade and commerce, and take away all their comforts. To do this, he needs but shake his hand over them. Who would not fear so great a Being, and wait on him for the continuation and increase of national prosperity? We have need to pray that he would give a spirit of wisdom to our ministers, conduct and courage to our commanders and soldiers, and continue our unanimity, that we may not feel these dreadful evils.

2. See what a happy change the gospel makes in the state of nations, when it is cordially received. God would show favour to Egypt; and this is described, not by replenishing their rivers, multiplying their fish, increasing their trade, and establishing their concord; but by the spread of true religion among them; banishing idolatry and sin; disposing men to receive the gospel; to give themselves to the Lord, and worship him according to his institution. We may learn from this passage, what improvement we are to make of the gospel; to be thankful for Christ, that Saviour and great one; publicly and boldly to profess our relation and regard to him, and cultivate that peace and love which he requires of his peo-

ple. Let us, both in our social and private conduct, show that the gospel has this effect upon us; and we should earnestly pray that it may have the same effect upon others, even upon all mankind; and that by the more plentiful effusion of the spirit in the latter day, God may again say, *Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.*

CHAP. XX, XXI.

A type prefiguring the shameful captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia. This happened between the time that the Assyrian army took the defenced cities of Judah, and when they besieged Jerusalem, which was about three years.

1 IN the year that Tartan *(mentioned with Rabshakeh, 2 Kings* xviii. 17.) came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon, *that is, Sennacherib*, the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ash-
2 dod, and took it; At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, *which thou hast worn as a mourning habit for the sins and calamities of Judah and Israel*, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked, *that is, without an upper*
3 *garment*, and barefoot. And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years [for] a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; *not three years, but three days, to represent three years; or it may be rendered, for a three year's sign, that is, for a type or example of three*
4 *years*; So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with [their] buttocks, *or hind parts*, uncovered, to
5 the shame of Egypt, *who were a very proud people.* And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory; *the nations that trusted in them, and who had great expectations from the Ethiopians and Egyptians, particularly*
6 *Israel, shall be ashamed of their weak allies.* And the inhabitant of this isle, *or country*, shall say in that day, Behold, such [is] our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape? *we have no way to escape, now the Assyrians have such success against these nations.*

1 CHAP. XXI. The burden of the desert, *or plain*, of the sea; *that is, Babylon, which lay upon the rivers, and had large lakes like seas about it.* As whirlwinds in the south pass through, *come suddenly, irresistibly, and carry all before them*, [so] it cometh from the desert, *which lay between Persia and Babylon*, from a
2 terrible land. A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, *or, is dealt treacherously with*, and the spoiler spoileth, *or, is spoiled; Babylon is re-*

paid in her own coin. Go up, O Elam : besiege, O Media ; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease, *that is, the sighing of*
3 *the captive Israelites and others.* Therefore are my loins filled with pain ; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth. I was bowed down at the hearing
4 [of it ;] I was dismayed at the seeing [of it.] My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me : the night of my pleasure, *when I*
5 *used to take my repose,* hath he turned into fear unto me.* Prepare the table, watch in the watch tower, eat, drink ; *while you prepare your table, and are feasting in luxury, ye shall hear a sudden cry ;* arise, ye princes, [and] anoint the shield, *that they may be beautiful and serviceable, and the darts may easily slip off.*
6 For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman, *who may discern the approaching danger, and* let him declare what he
7 seeth. And he saw a chariot [with] a couple of horsemen, *or horses, that is, the commanders in chief, Cyrus and Darius,* a chariot of asses, *or mules, that is, the Persians,* [and] a chariot of camels, *the Medes, who made use of them ; they were both joined in this expedition ;* and he hearkened diligently with much
8 heed : And he cried, A lion ; *or, the watchman cried as a lion, with a terrible voice, at the sight of the danger approaching, and said,* My lord, I stand continually upon the watch tower in the day time, and I am set in my ward whole nights ; *I am very*
9 *careful to observe what passes :* And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, [with] a couple of horsemen. And he, *that is, the commander in chief,* answered and said, Babylon is fallen, *shall surely fall ;* and all the graven images of her gods he hath brok-
10 en unto the ground. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor ; *referring to the Israelites, who are represented as God's corn, in opposition to chaff and straw ; they shall be oppressed yet preserved ;* that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you *for your comfort.*
11 The burden of Dumah, *that is, of Idumea, or Edom.* He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night ? *The Edomites were alarmed with the approaching danger, and are here represented as eagerly address-*
12 *ing the prophet.* The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night ; *ye shall have peace and respite for a while, but a dark and dreadful night will follow :* If ye will inquire, inquire ye : return, come ; *if ye will inquire, inquire immediately, in good earnest ; and come, return to God, join yourselves to his people, and so escape the threatened destruction.*
13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye
14 lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.† The inhabitants of the land of Temah brought water to him that was thirsty,
15 they prevented with their bread him that fled. For they fled

* Some understand this of the prophet's concern for their calamities ; I rather think it is a description of the terror of Babylon, especially of Belshazzar, when the city was taken.

† These were the descendants of Abraham by Keturah. The king of Assyria might attack this people ; they used to pitch their tents in fruitful countries, but now they were glad to wander in forests, and to receive help from their neighbours.

from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow,
16 and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the LORD said
unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling,
and all the glory of Kedar, *the son of Ishmael, another clan or tribe*, shall fail; *within a year all their flocks and power shall*
17 *fail*: And the residue of the number of archers, *for which this tribe was famous*, the mighty men of the children of Kedar,
shall be diminished: for the Lord GOD of Israel hath spoken
[it.]

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the vanity of creature dependencies: the expectations of Ethiopia, and of Egypt, the glory of Israel, were all disappointed. The skill of archers, the most numerous forces, and great wealth, are no security to a nation when God determines to punish. Let us learn wisdom by these repeated examples. If we trust in man, and neglect God, or do not make him our chief confidence, he will suffer us to be disappointed, and he is just and kind in it. *Truly in vain is salvation looked for from the hills and the multitude of mountains; our help is only in the name of our God.*

2. See how soon the carnal mirth of men may be turned into sorrow. Another seasonable lesson for us. When the Babylonians were preparing the table, eating, drinking, and making merry, God was preparing slaughter and destruction for them. How suddenly did confusion and misery come on this sensual, riotous people! Thus if we transgress the bounds of temperance and prudence, *the night of our pleasure may be turned into fear.* Though we escape every other enemy, death may come upon us unawares, and *the end of our mirth may be heaviness.* Let us therefore never be off our guard, but be peculiarly watchful in seasons of temptation, and remember, that *for all these things God will bring us into judgment.*

3. God's people are dear to him, and he intends their benefit, even when he corrects them. The church is his husbandry. His people are the corn of his floor, valuable in themselves, and dear to him. He may see good to thresh or bruise them by afflictions, but it is to purify them. Hypocrites are as chaff, worthless and contemptible; he takes no concern about them, suffers them to go on in ease and prosperity: but at length *they shall be burned with unquenchable fire.* Let us then be patient in tribulation, and wait upon God to make all issue in our salvation.

4. In every time of danger it is our duty immediately to return to God. Ministers are appointed as watchmen, in the name of God to give men warning of the danger they are in, and the destruction that is before them; and it is their duty to attend to the warning, to inquire the will of God, and immediately comply with the intimations of it. They must return to him and their duty, if they desire to escape destruction; if they linger, it is at their

peril; for though every thing may now look bright and pleasing as the morning, yet *the night cometh when no man can work*, and they will sink into blackness of darkness for ever; therefore, *today, while it is called today*, let us *hear his voice and* not *harden our hearts.*

CHAP. XXII.

The title of this chapter, as it stands in our Bible, is a mistake: the former part relates to the invasion of Judea by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's time; the latter to some changes in his court.

1 THE burden of the valley of vision, *that is, of Jerusalem, most of which was in a valley surrounded with mountains. It is called the valley of vision, because there God was known; it had the scriptures and the prophets, and other means of seeing, that is, knowing the will of God.* What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house tops, *to observe the motion of the ene-*
2 *my, or look out for help?* Thou that art, *that is, hast been*, full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city, *full of trade, hurry, and diversions:* thy slain [men are] not slain with the sword, nor
3 dead in battle, *but dead with fear.* All thy rulers are fled together, *that is, the rulers of the fortified cities that Sennacherib had taken*, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, [which] have fled from far; *they are taken prisoners by the archers and bound like captives, though they are*
4 *fled far away.* Therefore said I, Look away from me: I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, *let me alone to indulge my grief*, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.
5 For [it is] a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision; *there are dangers without and troubles within, but all are from the Lord of hosts*; breaking down the walls *of the cities they had taken; or rather, some of the walls or houses about Jerusalem, to fortify it the better;* and of crying to the mountains; *calling to those who guarded the passes of the mountains to know what intelligence they had of the enemy, or to exhort them to defend their posts vig-*
6 *orously.* And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men [and] horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield; *that is, the Persians and Medes, who were subject to the king of Assyria, or allies in*
7 *this war.* And it shall come to pass, [that] thy choicest vallies shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves
8 in array at the gate. And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest; *referring to Sennacherib's taking the fenced cities, which were a covering to the country; and especially to his being furnished with arms out of the armoury that Solomon had built,*
9 *and where he put his shields*, 1 *Kings*, x. 17. Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many; *the fort*

and castle of the city, and repaired them; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool; *probably conveyed them under ground to furnish themselves with water, and deprive the*
10 *enemy of it.* And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall; *that is, numbered the houses, either to lay a tax on them, or to see which*
11 *might be pulled down, in order the better to defend the walls.* Ye made also a ditch between the two walls, *to strengthen the city,* for the water of the old pool, *and conveyed water thither for its security:* but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago; *in all this ye have forgotten Jehovah, who appointed this place for your capital.*
12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call, *by the language of his providence, and the voice of his prophet,* to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; *to*
13 *fasting and all the marks of deep humiliation:* And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die; *instead of humiliation, there was nothing but mirth and feasting, and a stupid despair, grounded upon licentious principles, a disbelief or a contempt of a future state.* And it was revealed in mine
14 ears by the LORD of hosts, *that I might publish it,* Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts; *that is, it shall never be purged; ye shall perish in these your iniquities. Then follows a prophecy of some changes in Hezekiah's court.*
15 Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, [even] unto Shebna, which [is] over the house,* [and
16 say,] What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, *what estate, family, or relations?* that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, [as] he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, [and] that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock? *a grand sepulchre, like a palace, to keep up thy memory to succeed-*
17 *ing times, as if sure of continuing in thy post?* Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee; *or, the Lord, who covered thee with an excellent covering, and clothed thee gorgeously, shall surely cover thee with disgrace, as criminals when led to execution, were covered, as if*
18 *unworthy to see the light.* He will surely violently turn and toss thee [like] a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, *in a far country, and obscurity,* and there the chariots of thy glory, *in which thou hast been used to ride in state,* [shall be] the shame of thy lord's house, *that is, of Ahaz, who probably advanced him*
19 *to this dignity.* And I will drive thee from thy station, and from
20 thy state shall he pull thee down, *that is, God shall do it.* And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Elia-
21 kim the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, *he shall have thy*

* So we suppose him to have been a foreigner, as his father is not mentioned; and the Jews say, that he kept up a traiterous correspondence with the Assyrians.

honour and power, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah; *he shall take a tender care of the city*
22 *and country*. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, *that is, he shall be lord steward of the household, bearing a key as the badge of his office;* so he shall open, and
23 none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him [as] a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house; *he shall be fixed in his*
24 *station, and be an honour to his family*. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons, *that is, large and small vessels, (the allusion to a nail being still carried on,) his relations and de-pendants shall fare the better for him, and be advanced by him,*
25 *and he shall not be removed like his predecessors*. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that [was] upon it shall be cut off, *that is, Shebna, and all his de-pendants:* for the LORD hath spoken [it.]

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are again taught how vain all military preparations are, without a dependence on God. The prophet mentions the particular methods that were taken to fortify and defend the city; these were wise and right, and they are not blamed for taking them, but for trusting to them, and forgetting God; for not looking to him, as the strength of his people; not having respect to him, who alone can give deliverance. There are too many wise counsellors and brave soldiers, that never look to their Maker; their measures may be prudent and vigorous, but, without God, they will all be in vain. It is peculiarly inexcusable for a people who live in a valley of vision, in a land of light and religious privileges, to trust to an arm of flesh. Let us guard againt this error, have continual respect to the LORD JEHOVAH, and pray that all who have the direction of our public concerns may do so too.

2. It is highly provoking to God for his professing people to follow diversions, and be making merry, when he calls to humiliation and devotion. When his judgments are abroad in the earth, when we are engaged in war, when our expenses are great, and our burdens heavy, it is then a time for humiliation and prayer; his providence calls us to it; his word commands it. The intent of his judgments is to promote humiliation; and that is a proper qualificatoin for his mercy. But alas! how little of this appears! Luxury, mirth, and diversions, dissipation of thought, forgetfulness of God, and licentious principles prevail among us; and there is reason to fear that for these things (which are peculiarly unseasonable and mischievous amidst public troubles and dangers) God

should bring ruin upon us. Let us, like the prophet, bewail such days of public trouble and perplexity; and *in the day of adversity consider; humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time.*

3. See in what slippery places great men stand. Shebna was the chief officer in Hezekiah's court, his prime minister; he thought of no change, his dependants thought of none; he concluded he should live and die in honour at Jerusalem, and be buried in his stately sepulchre. But he and his adherents were cast off, and he died in shame and obscurity. We see even in the present day such changes in courts; which should cool our ardor for wealth and greatness, and lead us to seek the favour of the King of kings, and the honour that comes from him; for he will never cast off his faithful servants. Nor let us think ourselves secure in any private station, however comfortable; we may be tossed to distant places, die, and be buried, we know not where. Let us then *rejoice, as though we rejoiced not;* and seek an inheritance above, that is *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

4. The hand of God should be owned in the change of placemen and courtiers. God made those changes in Hezekiah's court, by disposing his mind to turn out Shebna, and to put Eliakim into his place; and *promotion still cometh from him.* Though we imagine that it depends on the pleasure and fancy of princes, and those who influence them, it is *He sets up and pulls down whom he pleaseth.* Let us think of this when we hear of such changes in favour of some whom we think are less favourable to the true interest of our country than we could wish. It should excite our earnest prayers, that God, who has the king's heart in his hand, would dispose him to make a wise choice of servants and officers, who shall be more intent on the public welfare than on aggrandizing their families, or advancing their dependants; yea, who may be like Eliakim, fathers of their country, and take the tenderest care of the interest of the people. *Many seek the ruler's favour, but every man's judgment proceedeth from the Lord.*

5. The character of Eliakim naturally leads our thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God hath exalted to the highest authority over his house and kingdom, *Rev.* iii. 7. He has the highest dignity in his heavenly court, and unlimited authority over his church below. He is a nail in a sure place, who shall never be removed, never lose his interest in his father's esteem. All true christians confide upon him; he is the support of their spiritual life, and their possessing eternal life depends on him; they derive their honour from him; and they are for ever secured by him. No other nail will support them; but he is able to bear the stress of all those concerns which by faith are hung upon him. Let us then trust in him ourselves, and be earnestly desirous that our offspring and their interest may be hung upon him also; that we may be able to say in life and death, *I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep what I have committed to him till that day.*

CHAP. XXIII.

This chapter is a prophecy of the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, after a siege of thirteen years; the inhabitants all fled to sea with their best effects, so that there was only the naked city left, which he entirely destroyed; it was the most famous city for trade, merchandise, and naval strength, in the world.

1 THE burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, *all trading ships, especially those of Spain;* for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in; *no house of business, or entertainment, no ships entering into the harbour:* from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them; *Greece and Italy have heard*
2 *that it is wasted.* Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle, *or peninsula:* thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea,
3 have replenished.* And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, [is] her revenue; and she is a mart of na-
4 tions.† Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, [even] the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, [nor] bring up virgins; *even Sidon is deflowered by this event, and sends*
5 *forth no more colonies, nor do any persons come to settle there.* As at the report concerning Egypt [so] shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre; *all Egypt shall be astonished at the downfal of Tyre, which Nebuchadnezzar shall quickly after conquer;*
6 *this was to be his wages.* Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye
7 inhabitants of the isle. [Is] this your joyous [city,] whose antiquity [is] of ancient days?‡ her own feet shall carry her afar
8 off to sojourn; *her inhabitants shall fly from home.* Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning [city,] whose merchants [are] princes, whose traffickers [are] the honourable
9 of the earth?‖ The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, [and] to bring into contempt all the honoura-
10 ble of the earth. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish; *so called because enriched by its trade at sea; pass through thy territories, to save thyself in foreign countries, as swift as a river, for* [there is] no more strength; *thou hast no power*
11 *to resist the enemy.* He, *that is, God,* stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant [city,] to destroy the strong
12 holds thereof. And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon:** arise, pass over to Chit-

* Tyre was a colony of Sidon.

† The products of Egypt, especially corn, were brought thither and carried to other nations by the Tyrians.

‡ In the time of Joshua (*chap.* xix. 29) it was called, *the strong city Tyre.* Many heathen writers speak of it as very ancient.

‖ Tyre boasted of itself as the queen of cities; and its trade brought immense wealth to its inhabitants.

** Sidon was older than Tyre, and the mother of it; it is mentioned in Genesis, in Jacob's blessing, and called *Great Sidon,* in *Joshua* xix. 28.

tim; there also thou shalt have no rest; *the Sidonians shall find*
13 *no rest in the countries to which they flee.** Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, [till] the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; [and] he brought
14 it to ruin.† Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, *or Tartessus, in Spain, a place which they much frequented:* for your strength is laid waste.
15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king, *or family of kings, namely Nebuchadnezzar, his son and grandson:* after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot, *that is,*
16 *be restored and rebuilt.*‡ Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered; *she shall endeavour to*
17 *allure others to traffick with her as before.*‖ And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication, *that is, shall traffick,* with all the kingdoms of the world upon
18 the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD; *she shall make a better use of her wealth than before:* it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing; *it shall be brought to Jerusalem for the use of the priests, a prophecy that many should be converted to the Jewish religion, and which had probably a further reference to their embracing the gospel, as many of them did. We have an account in Acts* xxi. 4. *of some disciples there, and Paul's interview with them; and we read in ancient ecclesiastical history of many converts, and some martyrs there.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. SEE here an instance of the awful and melancholy change that may be brought on the most wealthy and powerful state. It is a thought that often occurs; yet there is none that is more necessary to be attended to. The rich, populous, and flourishing city of Tyre was destroyed, and its inhabitants forced to flee. This joyous city, full of mirth and diversions, was overwhelmed with sorrow and sadness. We may learn hence the vanity of the world; and let those who live in wealth and splendor observe how soon it may sink and wither, and they lose their all, and be glad to fly any where for rest. Since wealth increases luxury and debauch-

* Some of them Nebuchadnezzar conquered, and their own colonies were in an unsettled state, when Tyre was destroyed.

† Babylon was a place of no note or eminence at the time of this prophet; the people lived in tents till the Assyrians built that city for their reception; yet the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, should bring Tyre to ruin, though a strong, magnificent, and wealthy city.

‡ Probably when Cyrus delivered the Israelites, he released the Tyrians, and many of them settled near the old city, which was then to return to her former state of prosperity and traffick.

‖ A rich city may be compared to an harlot on that account; but perhaps here is an allusion to their lewdness, and debauchery, and their being skilled in the arts of fraud and luxury.

ery, we have need to be particularly watchful. But the principal ground of God's controversy with Tyre was its pride, *v.* 9. Men are very apt to increase in pride as their substance increases; and therefore it is needful to charge those who are rich in this world, that they be *not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches*, since this instance shows how soon they may make themselves wings and fly away.

2. We learn how to employ our substance to the best advantage, namely, to consecrate it to God. Let the merchandise of the tradesman, and the hire of the labourer, *be holiness to the Lord*, devoted to him, and employed for him in works of piety and charity, in relieving the necessitous, and supporting and encouraging the gospel. We see by *v.* 18, that when it is treasured and laid up it is not holiness to the Lord; neither is it so when it is extravagantly spent. As God gives us our substance, it becomes us to employ it for him, then it will turn to the best account. By being *rich in good works, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, we shall lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come.*

CHAP. XXIV.

This chapter contains a general description of the miseries brought upon Israel and the neighbouring nations, first by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and then by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

1 BEHOLD, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh
it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scatteth abroad
the inhabitants thereof; *there shall be a general confusion, as at*
2 *first when the earth was without form.* And it shall be, as with
the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his
master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the
buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the bor-
rower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to
him; *there shall be a general desolation, and all ranks and orders*
3 *shall be involved in the same calamity.* The land shall be utterly
emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this
4 word. The earth mourneth [and] fadeth away, the world lan-
guisheth [and] fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do
languish; *who have most to lose, and are least able to bear suffer-*
5 *ings.* The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof;
because they have transgressed the laws, changed, *or neglected*,
the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant; *either the Mo-*
6 *saic law, or the covenant with Noah.* Therefore hath the curse
devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate *by*
fire, sword, or pestilence: therefore the inhabitants of the earth
7 are burned, and few men left. The new wine mourneth, the
vine languisheth, *and is spoiled by the enemy*, all the merry heart-
8 ed do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them

9 that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall
not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them
that drink it; *they shall have no relish for their former delights.*
10 The city of confusion, *either Samaria, or Jerusalem,* is broken
down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in; *the*
11 *inhabitants are all gone, either dead, or in captivity.* [There is]
a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth
12 of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate
is smitten with destruction; *the enemy may enter when they*
13 *please.* When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among
the people, [there shall be] as the shaking of an olive tree, [and]
as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. *Nevertheless*
a remnant shall be left, and these shall be serious and devout;
14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty
of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea, *over which they*
15 *have fled.* Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, *in the*
greatest distress and the heaviest afflictions, [even] the name of
the Lord GOD of Israel in the isles of the sea.
16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs,
the dispersed people of God keep up and profess their religion,
[even] glory to the righteous *God.* But I said, My leanness,
my leanness, wo unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt
treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers, *or apostate*
people, have dealt very treacherously; *I am so affected with the*
people's hypocrisy toward God, and dishonesty toward one another,
17 *that I am consumed away.* Fear, and the pit, and the snare,
18 [are] upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come
to pass, [that] he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall
into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit
shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are
open, and the foundations of the earth do shake; *an allusion to*
the deluge; they run any where for safety, but still run into dan-
19 *ger.* The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dis-
20 solved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel
to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage,
or, as easily as a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be
heavy upon it, *sin shall sink it;* and it shall fall and not rise
21 again. And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the LORD
shall punish the host of the high ones [that are] on high, and
the kings of the earth, *the Assyrian and Chaldean monarchs, who*
22 *have done so much mischief* upon the earth. And they shall be
gathered together, [as] prisoners are gathered in the pit, and
shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be
visited; *that is, the Jews, who had been as prisoners, shall be vis-*
23 *ited in mercy, released, and return to their own land.* Then the
moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the
LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem;
that is, the divine perfections shall be so illustrated, that the bright-
ness of them shall obscure the sun and moon, as they do lesser
lights; and before his ancients gloriously; *his priests and an-*

cient servants, who saw the desolation of their country, shall see all the glory that shall be displayed in the destruction of these monarchies, in punishing the wicked and sparing and restoring the righteous.

REFLECTIONS.

1. OBSERVE how sin defiles and destroys a land. It is that which makes a land tremble, empties it of its treasures and inhabitants, and brings confusion and desolation upon it. See what sins in particular do this, namely, transgressing the law of nature, the rules of the creation; changing the ordinances of God, the institutions of revealed religion; inventing new ones, neglecting the old, and making no conscience of complying with them: this brings great guilt on particular persons, and on nations, that is, not complying with the terms of the everlasting covenant. See then how necessary it is to observe the divine laws and ordinances if we desire to escape the curse.

2. See the difference between carnal and spiritual joys; the joy of sinners and saints. The joy of the sinner arises from music, wine, and gay company; and when these are gone, his joys are gone; his mirth is over, and it ends in heaviness. But the joy of the saint arises from and centres in the blessed God, and the foundation of his comfort will not fail. He can *rejoice in tribulation;* and when the judgments of God lay all around him waste, *he can joy in the God of his salvation.* It is easy to infer who are the happiest people, and in which number we should desire to be found.

3. See the duty of God's people in seasons of affliction. *v.* 15. *Glorify ye the Lord in the fires,* acknowledge his hand in affliction, reverence his power and justice. He who kindles the fire will moderate its violence; will be with his servants when they pass through it; and deliver them out of it: and on all those accounts they should glorify him, trust in him, and wait patiently for his salvation.

4. The various changes in states and kingdoms illustrate the perfections, and display the glory of the Lord. It is he who doeth these things, *v.* 1. When nations are made desolate, he commands it; when the high ones of the earth are humbled and punished, it is the King of kings who doeth it. When oppressors are brought down, and God's servants delivered, it is a glorious display of his power and sovereignty, his hatred of oppression and injustice, his faithfulness to his promises, and kindness to his people. Let us then carefully observe his glories as thus displayed, and lift up our voices, and sing for the majesty of the Lord.

CHAP. XXV.

The prophet in this chapter praiseth God for his judgments, for his saving benefits, and for his victorious salvation. This is applied by many to the victory of the Jews over the Assyrians; but it rather refers to the gospel church, and God's appearances for it.

1 O LORD, thou [art] my God; I will exalt thee, I will
praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful [things;
thy] counsels of old [are] faithfulness [and] truth; *thou hast*
2 *punctually fulfilled what thou didst declare of old.* For thou hast
made of a city an heap; [of] a defenced city a ruin: a palace
of strangers to be no city; *cities which were like palaces, to which*
strangers resorted out of curiosity, shall be utterly ruined; it shall
never be built; *which expresses the church's complete triumph*
3 *over its enemies, especially over the heathen.* Therefore shall the
strong people glorify thee; *those that have been enemies to thee*
and thy cause, shall bring glory to thee: the city of the terrible
nations shall fear thee; *being humbled by these judgments, they*
shall be converted, or at least forced to acknowledge thy power.
4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the
needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the
heat, when the blast of the terrible ones [is] as a storm [against]
the wall; *when hot suns and burning winds are beating against*
5 *them, which seem as if they would destroy them.* Thou shalt
bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place;
[even] the heat with the shadow of a cloud; *thou wilt destroy the*
enemies of thy church and gospel as easily as thou canst make a
cloud to shelter men in the heat of the day: the branch, *or rather,*
the rejoicing, of the terrible ones shall be brought low, *and thy*
6 *people have quiet and refreshment.* And in this mountain, *that*
is, Zion, or the gospel church, shall the LORD of hosts make unto
all people, *to the Gentiles,* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines
on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees
well refined; *of wine that has stood long on the lees, that is rich*
and strong, and throughly refined; that is, they shall feast on thy
7 *promises, ordinances, and consolations.* And he will destroy in
this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and
the veil that is spread over all nations; *he will remove their ig-*
8 *norance, darkness, and prejudices.* He will, *at the resurrection,*
swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away
tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people, *all occa-*
sion of sorrow, and all the reproach thrown upon his people, shall
he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken
9 [it.] And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this [is] our God;
we have waited for him, and he will save us: this [is] the
LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in
his salvation; *then the saints shall have the highest occasion for*
10 *triumph.* For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest,
it shall exert itself and defend his people, and Moab shall be trod-

den down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill: *Moab is here put figuratively for the enemies of the*
11 *church.* And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth [his hands] to swim; *God can as easily and effectually remove them on every side, as a man when swimming can his hand;* and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands; *their goods which were unjustly gotten, or the trophies of their vic-*
12 *tory shall be taken away.* And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, [and] bring to the ground, [even] to the dust. *A very emphatical description; though a castle, situated on an eminence, and surrounded with strong walls, he shall not only take but demolish it; and that so entirely, that the fortification shall be beaten to dust, and its eminence levelled with the ground; that is, the pride of hell shall be mortified, Satan's strong holds be cast down, and all the efforts made against the people of God prove vain, and end in the ruin of their enemies.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. GOD is to be praised for all the great and wonderful things that he doeth; in bringing down proud cities, states, and empires; confounding the devices of the enemies of his church; supporting his servants amidst dangers and persecutions; and refreshing them with his favour and love, when they are ready to sink and faint. All are done according to the counsels of infinite wisdom, faithfulness, and righteousness, and it becomes us to admire them, as far beyond what any other being could do, and exalt him who is *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.*

2. Let us particularly praise him for the riches of gospel grace. What a noble feast has he made for us gentiles! how refreshing and nourishing! infinitely beyond the delights of the sons of men. He hath made provision for removing our prejudices and ignorance, enlightening our understandings, regulating our spirits, and banishing all the sorrows of the heart. Let us value his word, his ordinances, and his comforts, as the choicest dainties; make light of all the reproaches we may suffer for God and conscience; and rejoice in hope of that day, when, as is expressed, *Rev.* xxi. 4. *God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.* Once more,

3. See with what temper mercies and deliverances are to be received, *v.* 9. they are to be rejoiced in; and our joy is to terminate in God; we are to wait patiently for his appearances, and then they will be more seasonable and welcome. We are to give him the glory of the greatness and perfection of our salvation; and while we own it as God's work, and exalt him as our God, let us behave suitable to our relation to him, that we may at length partake of that everlasting salvation, which he will bestow upon all his people.

CHAP. XXVI.

This chapter, like the foregoing, is a song of praise, and refers to gospel times. It foretells the success of God's cause in the hands of Christ over all opposition.

1 IN that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, *where the gospel shall be first planted;* We have a strong
city; salvation will [God] appoint [for] walls and bulwarks; *he*
2 *will guard and defend his own interest.* Open ye the gates, that
the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in;
that the pious Jews and Gentiles may enter in, and all be incorporated
3 *as the city of God.* Thou wilt keep [him] in perfect peace,
[whose] mind [is] stayed [on thee:] because he trusteth in
4 thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHO-
5 VAH [is] everlasting strength: For he bringeth down them
that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth
it low, [even] to the ground; he bringeth it [even] to the
dust. *As the church is represented as the city of God, so the so-*
ciety of its enemies is described as a city; he will overthrow the
strongest cities of his enemies, as Sodom, the Egyptians, and Ba-
6 *bylon, were overthrown.* The foot shall tread it down, [even]
the feet of the poor, [and] the steps of the needy; *those who are*
most despised, that is, meek and humble christians, shall overcome
7 *and triumph over all their enemies.* The way of the just [is] up-
rightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just,
8 *or rather make it plain and level.* Yea, in the way of thy judg-
ments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; *patiently submitted to*
thy correction; the desire of [our] soul [is] to thy name, and to
the remembrance of thee; *we have expected deliverance from*
thee, and taken pains to keep up our devout affections to thee.
9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my
spirit within me will I seek thee early; *early and late have our*
desires been to thee: for when thy judgments [are] in the earth,
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness; *thy judg-*
ments are adapted to teach men righteousness; all ought to learn
10 *it, and some will.* Let favour be showed to the wicked, [yet]
will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness,
amidst great religious advantages and good examples, will he deal
11 unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD. LORD,
[when] thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; *will not own it,*
nor be subject to it, so as to comply with thy design: [but] they
shall see, and be ashamed for [their] envy at the people, *or for*
thy zeal toward thy people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall
devour them; *the fire with which thine enemies are consumed.*
12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought
all our works in us, *or, for us; and this is our encouragement.*
13 O LORD our God, [other] lords beside thee, have had domin-
ion over us: *other princes and evil lusts:* [but] by thee only
will we make mention of thy name; *by thy favour and assistance*

14 *we will be solely thine.* [They are] dead, they shall not live; [they are] deceased, they shall not rise, *that is, the other lords and oppressors:* therefore hast thou visited, *or rather, because thou hast visited,* and destroyed them, and made all their memory
15 to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed [it] far [unto] all the ends of the earth *by former captivities; or*
16 *it may rather refer to the spread of the church of Christ.* LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer
17 [when] thy chastening [was] upon them. Like as a woman with child, [that] draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, [and] crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy
18 sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen: *we have been big with expectations of deliverance, and uneasy till it was accomplished; but have been sadly disappointed. What follows is God's answer to the church's*
19 *complaint.* Thy dead [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body, *that is, my church,* shall they arise. *Therefore* awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs; *my favour shall revive thee again, as the dew revives the grass,* and the earth shall cast out the dead; *all countries where you are dispersed, shall restore you again.**

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; *fly to God as thy defence: as men retire to their most secret apartments to shelter themselves in storms and dangers, thus do thou when the destroying angel is passing through the land:* hide thyself as it were for a little moment, *the shortest space of time,* until the indignation be overpast.
21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain, *that is, the blood that she had drank: those that shed it thought it was for ever covered, but their guilt shall appear. Some understand it, that the number of their enemies who were slain should be so great, that they should lie unburied.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the reasonableness and advantage of an humble, cheerful trust in God. This the prophet in the name of the church expresses, and in the name of God, exhorts to. It is our duty to trust in him, to depend upon him, and wait for him in every circumstance of life; to believe in his providence and hope in his promises. This is highly reasonable, for *in him is everlasting strength;* it will secure our peace with him and our own conscience;

* This is applied in Ezekiel's vision, chap. xxxvii. 11, 12. to the Gentiles, or rather, to the Jews in the latter day.

it will free us from anxiety and tormenting fears; and we shall be safe in the chambers of divine protection. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings whose mind is fixed, trusting in God.*

2. We see what our duty is in seasons of affliction, whether private or public, and what use we should make of them. When God lifts up his hand he expects us to see it; to observe the operations of his providence, to consider the design of them, and learn righteousness by them. We should *wait on him in the way of his judgments;* entertain good thoughts of him, strong desires after him, and seek to him for relief. His judgments are adapted to warn and alarm the unthinking, to rouse the secure and quicken all. His great design is, that *we may learn righteousness;* otherwise we shall suffer in vain. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and teachest out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the day of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*

CHAP. XXVII.

To what particular circumstance of the Jewish church and nation this chapter has an immediate reference, it is hard to say; it is applicable to the church in general when under the oppression of any cruel tyrant: such are often described as serpents and dragons; thus was Pharaoh, and so are the popish powers.

1 IN that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong
sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that
[is] in the sea; *who by violence and subtile arts endeavours to*
2 *destroy his people.* In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard
of red wine; *that is, the church, called a vineyard of red wine, as*
3 *that was reckoned the choicest and best wine.* I the LORD do
keep it; I will water it every moment: lest [any] hurt it, I will
keep it night and day; *I will defend it from its enemies, and sup-*
4 *ply it with provisions.* Fury [is] not in me: who would set the
briars [and] thorns against me in battle? I would go through
them, I would burn them together; *I am slow to anger, not*
wrathful and implacable; but those that oppose my gracious de-
signs shall be as suddenly and easily destroyed, as fire destroys bri-
5 *ars and thorns.* Or let him take hold of my strength, [that] he
may make peace with me; [and] he shall make peace with me;
let him by repentance and humiliation seek reconciliation with me,
and to stay the arm of my justice, then my mercy and strength shall be
6 *engaged in his favour.* He shall cause them that come of Jacob
to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of
the world with fruit; *that is, they shall revive again after their*
7 *oppressions.* Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that
smote him? [or] is he slain according to the slaughter of them
that are slain by him? *He shall leave a remnant of his people*

when he utterly destroys those enemies that were his instruments in
8 *correcting them.* In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; *the allusion to a vine is still carried on; he will prune it with love and moderation, so as not to destroy it:* he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind; *he moderates*
9 *the storm lest it should destroy the vine.* By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this [is] all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk stones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up; *the end of his chastisement is to reform him from sin, especially idolatry, and lead him to destroy his altars and images, and abolish the memory of them.*
10 *Nevertheless, Jerusalem shall suffer for its sins; for* Yet the defenced city [shall be] desolate, [and] the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof; *it shall lie for a while in desolation, like a vineyard whose fence is gone, so*
11 *that the cattle come to feed therein.* When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, *to gather the remains of the trees for fuel,* [and] set them on fire: for it [is] a people of no understanding; *they are quite stupid and sottish:* therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour.
12 *Yet they shall not always continue in this state.* And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river *Euphrates* unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel; *the Jews shall be recovered and restored; they shall be beat off, like corn separated from the chaff; they shall not be brought again in a body, but one by one, through God's influence on their minds.*
13 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem; *referring to Cyrus's proclamation for liberty; or the general alarm and summons to the congregations of Israel, who were gathered together by trumpets, and has a reference to their conversion in the latter day.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE have reason to rejoice in God's care of the church, amidst all its dangers and distresses. It is valuable in itself and dear to him. Many attempts have been made to hurt and destroy his vineyard, or to prevent its fruitfulness; but he guards it with a watchful eye, and waters it by his ordinances, his word and spirit, without which it would wither. If its enemies combine against it, he has a great and strong sword with which to punish them. We should therefore triumph in the security of the church, and encourage ourselves in the Lord its God, when it seems

to be in the greatest danger; and earnestly pray, that that part of the vineyard with which we are connected may be daily kept and watered by him.

2. We see what encouragement there is for sinners to return to God. They are enemies to him, and he is angry with them: but peace may be made; and it is of the utmost importance that it be made in time. It becomes them to humble themselves before God, that the stroke of his mighty hand may be averted, and his strength employed for their defence and happiness. *Fury is not in him*, or who could stand? He is willing to be reconciled; so that if sinners continue enemies to him, it is their own fault, and he will destroy them as easily and entirely as fire does briars and thorns. *Agree* then *with thine adversary quickly*, and be at peace, *and thereby good shall come unto thee.*

3. We are again taught the nature and design of affliction. The end of God in his corrections is *to take away sin*, to lead men to put away their iniquities with shame and detestation, and never return to them any more. Then our afflictions do us good when *they purge away our iniquity*: and therefore when we are afflicted we should *search and try our ways*, and *turn again unto the Lord*. To good men God moderates afflictions, prunes them in measure and mercy, and tempers the fury of the storm. Afflictions are quite different in their effects upon good and bad men; they are not smitten alike, though it may seem so to us. God's intentions to his children are friendly; all shall issue well, and *work together for their good.*

4. How vain are all those hopes of sinners which are only grounded on the mercy of God and his being their creator. It is very common for men to express a hope of being saved because God is their creator, and because he is merciful; while they go on in their trespasses, and are destitute of repentance and faith. But if that mercy be not earnestly sought, and those sins put away which disqualify them from being the objects of it, they will not find it: and though God formed them, yet as they do not answer the end for which they were made, but daily affront their Maker, *he will show them no favour.* Let us then not deceive ourselves, but labour to be wise, *understanding what the will of the Lord is*, and *be steadfast and immoveable in our obedience to it.*

CHAP. XXVIII.

The prophecies in this and the following chapters, to the thirtieth, relate principally to the invasion of Judea by Sennacherib; but are not arranged in the order they were delivered.

1 WO to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty [is] a fading flower, which [are] on the head of the fat vallies of them that are overcome with

wine! *that is, wo to the proud kingdom of the ten tribes, among whom drunkenness much prevailed; Samaria, so beautifully situated on a hill, with a fine vale below it, shall be destroyed by the*
2 *Assyrians.* Behold, the LORD hath a mighty and strong one, [which] as a tempest of hail [and] a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand; *as easily as an earthen vessel is dashed to the ground.*
3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trod-
4 den under feet: And the glorious beauty, which [is] on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, [and] as the hasty fruit before the summer; *it shall be as easily and quickly destroyed as early fruit; or it may be rendered,* '*the glorious beauty on their head, that is, the garland, shall be a fading flower, and the fat valley shall be as hasty fruit, that is soon ripe and soon destroyed:* which [when] he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.
5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, *Judah*
6 *shall enjoy his favour and protection.* And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate; *Hezekiah and his counsellors, shall be wise, shall repel the invaders, and carry the war into the country of their enemies.*
7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; *Judah also is guilty of this detestable crime of drunkenness;* the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in] judgment; *they neither teach nor judge aright.*
8 For all tables are full of vomit [and] filthiness, [so that there is]
9 no place [clean.] Whom shall he, *that is, any man,* teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breast; *notwithstanding their advantages, they are but like children*
10 *learning their first rudiments.* For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little; *the same things must be often inculcated upon them, in the plainest manner, and yet all in vain:*
11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people; *he will send foreign enemies among them, whose lan-*
12 *guage they shall not understand.** To whom he said, This [is] the rest [wherewith] ye may cause the weary to rest; and this [is] the refreshing; *though he had told them their duty often and plainly, had given them great encouragement, and had promised*
13 *them rest and refreshment,* yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little,

* The apostle applies this to the abuse of the gift of tongues, which made that a curse which was intended for a blessing.

[and] there a little ; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken ; *rejecting God's word and despising his methods of instruction, will be the cause*
14 *of their calamity.* Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which [is] in Jerusalem ; *ye*
15 *chief magistrates that scorn my threatenings.* Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement ; *we have taken as effectual methods to secure ourselves from danger as if we had done so ;* when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us : for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood, *that is, idols and foreign alliances,* have we hid ourselves.
16 Therefore, thus saith the Lord GOD, *I will direct you to a surer refuge,* Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone,] a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste ; *shall not hurry to and fro, shall not be confounded.*
17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet ; *that is, I will deal with you in strict justice ; an allusion to builders :* and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place ; *my judgments shall be like a storm of hail, or a flood that carries all before it.*
18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand ; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it ;
19 *it shall suddenly overwhelm you like an inundation.* From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you : for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night ; and it shall be a vexation only [to] understand the report ; *when you think you have put it by, it shall turn again with greater fury : even the report of its coming upon others shall vex you, and occasion painful fears. Some render it, 'nothing but vexation will make you understand*
20 *instruction.'* For the bed is shorter than that [a man] can stretch himself [on it :] and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself [in it.] *A proverbial expression, as if he had*
21 *said, All your stratagems and confederacies shall fail.* For the LORD shall rise up as [in] mount Perazim, *where David slew the Philistines,* he shall be wroth as [in] the valley of Gibeon, *where Joshua destroyed the Canaanites,* that he may do his work, his strange work ; and bring to pass his act, his strange act ; *when God's professing people are hypocrites, he will treat them as he used to do their enemies ; though this is strange work, disagreeable to him, and such as his people have not been used to feel, yet it is*
22 *necessary.* Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong ; *lest you be brought under a foreign yoke :* for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth, *or the whole land, that is, against the two remaining tribes, as well as the ten which I have prophesied against before. The prophet then concludes with a beautiful parable, which is designed to show, that as the husband-*

man has times and methods for ploughing and manuring the ground, sowing and threshing the grain, and the like, so God has seasons of mercy and judgment, and takes different measures for amendment or destruction.

23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my
24 speech. Doth the ploughman plough all day, *or every day*, to sow? doth he *every day* open and break the clods of his ground?
25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley, *or, the wheat in the principal place, and*
26 *barley in the appointed place*, and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, [and] doth teach him.
27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod; *different kinds of threshing instruments are used, according to the*
28 *kind and strength of the grain.* Bread [corn] is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break [it with] the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it [with] his horsemen; *bread corn must be bruised in a mortar, or ground in a mill, because other in-*
29 *struments are not capable of making it small enough.* This *skill in husbandry, or rather, this judgment and consumption*, also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, [which] is wonderful in counsel, [and] excellent in working; *who afflicts his people more or less, as their characters and cases require.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the detestable nature and great guilt of drunkenness. It overcomes men, deprives them of their reason, stupifies their understandings, leads them into fatal errors, and exposes them to the practice of every iniquity. Of all drunkards, those of Ephraim were the worst; they were God's professing people, had been better instructed than others, and should therefore have set an example of temperance and sobriety. The word of God pronounces a wo upon such; and the New Testament assures us that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Let us all therefore be warned, and *take heed to ourselves, lest at any time our hearts are overcharged with gluttony and drunkenness, and that day* of judgment *come upon us unawares.*

2. We learn how graciously God condescends to teach men their duty; he gives *precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little;* he gives his instructions in a plain, concise manner; and they are often repeated; both to help our memories and impress our hearts. Thus should parents teach their children, and not overburden their memories and confound their judgments. Thus also should ministers teach their hearers; give them short, plain, familiar views of their duty; and frequently repeat their admonitions, even though some nicer hearers may nauseate them. The design of all is to afford present refreshment, and lead to eternal rest. But if men

will not hear, *they will be broken, and snared, and taken;* and the word will be *a savour of death unto death* to their souls.

3. Let us regard the Lord Jesus Christ as a sure foundation stone, and trust in him. The sixteenth verse is expressly applied to him in the New Testament. He is a corner stone, which unites and supports the whole building; precious in the sight of God and all true believers: he is a sure stone, that cannot be broken or removed. He that builds his final hopes on this foundation shall not be confounded; but whatever else we build upon, it will be *a refuge of lies, which the hail will sweep away.* There is no security but in Christ; *and blessed are all they that trust in him.*

4. We see the danger of making a jest of the word of God. There were scornful men in Jerusalem, who ridiculed the prophet's reproofs and admonitions, therefore *God made their bands strong;* and gave them up to their hearts' lusts. They were held in fetters of iniquity, as well as made captives by the Assyrians. We should be particularly cautious against this sin. If what ministers say should not be quite agreeable to our inclinations, or their manner to our taste, we should not be mockers. Serious things must not be turned into a jest; for God and his word jest with no man. What is honestly intended ought to be well taken, and what is seriously spoken ought to be seriously regarded. When men despise the word, and become sermon proof, sin gains dominion over them; and whether they heed and believe them or not, the threatenings of God shall be executed, and the consumption determined shall destroy them.

5. God is to be acknowledged in all the skill and sagacity of mankind; and in the different circumstances and conditions of human life. The business of the husbandman seems to require no great instruction or discretion, but in reality it does; and it is to be wished, that farmers would not plod on in the way of their fathers, without considering how far it is right; but endeavour by reading, experience, and observation to improve upon it. Especially should they ask instruction and discretion from God in their business, and give him praise for their success. Let the different dispensations of Providence to us, to our friends, and to the world, be considered as the appointments of him who is *wonderful in counsel;* that we may not mourn and complain, but *in patience possess our souls,* and cheerfully commit all events to God, who gives men all their wisdom and understanding, and must himself be infinitely wise.

CHAP. XXIX.

This prophecy refers to the Assyrian invasion. It contains promises and threatenings, reproofs and encouragements, according to the character of the people.

1 WO to Ariel, to Ariel, the city [where] David dwelt!* add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices; *go on regularly to your solemn feasts, and kill sacrifices as usual, but all*
2 *will be in vain, while you continue hypocritical; for* Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow; *notwithstanding this your formal worship, wherein you confide so much, both city and temple shall be brought into great straits:* and it shall be unto me as Ariel; *both Jerusalem and the neighbourhood about it shall be like the altar, filled with the bodies of dead men; many shall be killed in sallying out, and many die within the city.*
3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege
4 against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, [and] shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust; *thou shalt be very humble, and speak low, through faintness or fear of the enemy; yet*
5 *God will deliver thee.* Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones [shall be] as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly; *referring to the destruction of the Assyrians.*
6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and
7 the flame of devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a
8 night vision. It shall even be as when an hungry [man] dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty [man] dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, [he is] faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion; *their hopes shall be disappointed; they think to enrich themselves with its spoil, and swallow it up in their imagination; but they shall be deceived, and their disappointment be the more grievous.*
9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink; *referring to the stupidity of the people in the midst of these*
10 *alarming providences.* For the LORD hath poured upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered; *that is, God hath*

* Ariel signifies, *the Lion of God*; it means Jerusalem, and has a particular reference to the altar of burnt offerings there, which consumed the sacrifices.

given them up to a stupid, heavy, senseless temper, and permitted the eyes of their understanding to be covered, because they would
11 *not consider.* And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which [men] deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I can-
12 not; for it [is] sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. *Though the learned know it to be a book that is a prophecy, and an important one too, yet they are not desirous nor willing to read it; and the unlearned complain that it is dark and obscure, above their capacities, and therefore they give themselves no concern about it; thus the prejudices of the learned, and the ignorance of the unlearned, will defeat the end of the prophet's*
13 *instructions.* Wherefore the LORD said, Forasmuch as this people draw near [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; *by false prophets, or traditions of their teachers, as our Lord explains it:*
14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, [even] a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise [men] shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent [men] shall be hid; *because they will not understand, they shall not; their sins shall be their punishment; and this shall be a marvellous thing, the people shall lose their understanding in a wonderful degree, especially those who are now fa-*
15 *mous for it.* Wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? *Wo to the politicians who think God does not know their schemes, and who have formed them without any regard to his word, his prophets, or his providence; who know their counsels are not agreeable to his will, and*
16 *therefore wish to conceal them.* Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? *Their inverting the order of things, and leaving God out of their politics, without whom they have no more power to do any thing than clay has without the potter, is in effect denying him to be their Creator, or denying his wisdom.*
17 [Is] it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? *A proverbial expression of a great and surprising alteration, and is applicable both to the happy consequences of Sennacherib's defeat, and Hezekiah's forwarding a reformation among them.*
18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of dark-
19 ness. The meek also shall increase [their] joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel; *the book shall be no longer sealed; humble souls shall learn God's*
20 *will, shall do it, and rejoice in it.* For the terrible one, *the Assy-*

vian enemy abroad, is brought to nought, and the scorner, *at home*, is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity, *for opportunities of*
21 *sin and mischief*, are cut off: That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and
22 turn aside the just for a thing of nought.* Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face
23 now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel; *a new generation of the faithful shall spring up, who shall be in covenant with God, and shall sanctify him, and all good men*
24 *shall rejoice in the progress of the reformation.* They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine; *those who were formerly prejudiced shall become humble; those who said the word is hard, or the law unreasonable, shall find it otherwise, and be made wise and good by it.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. FROM this chapter we are taught the vanity and wickedness of hypocritical devotion. The Israelites in their degenerated state went on, year after year, to kill and offer up sacrifices; but all was in vain while they remained impenitent and unreformed. Thus vain will it be for men to go on in a round of religious services, while they do things that are unjust, impure, and sensual. May we guard against that detestable character described in *v.* 13. To worship God, is to draw nigh to him with an intent to honour him; but if the heart be not engaged, if that be absent, or unaffected, and we follow the precepts and customs of men, and not the rules of scripture, God will be highly displeased. It is no uncommon thing for persons to get a kind of mechanical habit of hearing and praying, without attention or seriousness, till they become quite stupid, and incapable of receiving any religious impression. He that does not grow better by religious services, grows worse, and *is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

2. We see the constant dependence of the human mind upon God for all its thoughts and operations. He can easily close men's eyes, and stupify their understandings; can puzzle their politics, and confound their devices. They can no more do what they contrive and intend without him, than the clay can form itself without the potter. He can, on the other hand, enlighten the most stupid, and bring *those that have erred to understand doctrine.* This therefore should teach us to improve our wisdom and skill for God, and to pray daily to him, that he would *enlighten our understandings, and direct our steps.*

* Those who opposed Hezekiah's reformation, and mocked the prophets, were glad to find any defects and imprudences in good men, that they might wound religion thereby: for this purpose they strained every word, and were especially glad to find any thing amiss in magistrates or ministers. Many of these were perhaps slain by the Assyrians.

3. The great advantages of a meek, teachable disposition of mind are here set forth; particularly, as it will promote our cheerfulness. Those who are meek, poor in spirit, humble and patient, will have joy in the Lord; and that joy will increase as those graces do. But passion, pride, and impatience are the greatest enemies to the soul in which they are indulged, and deprive it of real joy. Let us therefore *learn of Christ to be meek and lowly in heart*, and *in patience to possess our souls*; that, whatever our poverty or afflictions may be, *we may rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation.*

4. We see how odious to men and displeasing to God, the character of censorious and scornful men is. Too many who bear the christian name, resemble the persons here described; they *watch for iniquity*; take a malignant pleasure in discovering any blemishes in the characters of their neighbours, and reporting them to their disadvantage; they *make a man an offender for a word*; for a neglected compliment, a dubious expression, or a friendly admonition. They are particularly watchful to reproach a minister for a little impropriety of thought or expression in prayer or preaching; and are upon the watch to ensnare those who are appointed to reprove. However such men may pride themselves in their wit and discernment, and think themselves persons of peculiar sagacity and penetration, the Lord calls them *scorners*, and declares that *they shall be consumed and cut off. Wherefore*, my brethren, *let every one of us be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*

CHAP. XXX.

The Israelites here, as often before, are reproved for their confidence in Egypt, when the Assyrians came against them.

1 WO to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take
counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering,
but not of my spirit; *they seek shelter in Egypt, but not such a
one as I have directed them to seek*; that they may add sin to sin,
2 *by trusting to one alliance after another*: That walk, *that is, con-
trive and take pains*, to go down into Egypt, and have not asked
at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pha-
3 raoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Therefore shall
the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the
4 shadow of Egypt [your] confusion. For his princes were at
Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes; *the ambassadors of
Israel met those of Egypt there; they had a congress to settle the*
5 *terms of the alliance*: *but* They were all ashamed of a people
[that] could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but be a
shame, and also a reproach, *they were so weak or so treacherous.*
6 The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble
and anguish, from whence [come] the young and old lion, the
viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon
the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the

bunches of camels, to a people [that] shall not profit [them ;]
the Israelites will send their wealth on asses and camels, as a sub-
sidy, or to bribe Pharaoh's ministers and courtiers, through that
7 *wilderness which lies between them.* For the Egyptians shall
help in vain, and to no purpose : therefore have I cried con-
cerning this, *and published it aloud, that* Their strength [is] to sit
still, *in the use of regular means, and a humble, quiet dependence*
8 *upon God, who alone can help them.* Now go, write it before
them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the
time to come for ever and ever ; *publish it, and let it be recorded,*
9 *as a warning to future ages :* That this [is] a rebellious people,
lying children, children [that] will not hear the law of the LORD:
10 Which say to the seers, See not ; and to the prophets, Prophe-
sy not unto us right things ; *this is the true meaning and intent*
of what they say, while persecuting and bantering the true prophets
and encouraging the false ones, speak unto us smooth things,
prophesy deceits ; *preach only that which may gratify our humours*
11 *and our lusts :* Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the
path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us ; *do*
not stop us in our sinful ways ; do not preach up such strictness ;
do not mention the Holy One of Israel, (with which the prophets
usually introduced their reproofs and warnings ;) we are weary of
12 *hearing so much of it.* Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of
Israel, *whose name you do not like to hear,* Because ye despise this
word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:
13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to us as a breach ready to fall,
swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly
at an instant ; *your trust in Egypt shall be like a bulging wall,*
14 *that falls suddenly and unexpectedly.* And he shall break it as
the breaking of the potter's vessel that is broken in pieces ; he
shall not spare : so that there shall not be found in the bursting
of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water [with-
al] out of the pit ; *there shall not be a piece big enough for any*
common use ; this your confidence in Egypt, and yourselves there-
15 *by, shall be shattered to pieces.* For thus saith the Lord GOD,
the Holy One of Israel ; In returning and rest shall ye be saved ;
in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength ; *in re-*
turning to God and your duty, and an humble confidence in his
power, providence and promises, ye shall find strength and salva-
16 *tion :* and ye would not. But ye said, No ; for we will flee upon
horses ; therefore shall ye flee : and, We will ride upon the
swift ; *we will hire horses from Egypt to attack our enemies ;*
17 therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. One thousand
[shall flee] at the rebuke of one ; at the rebuke of five shall ye
flee : till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and
as an ensign on an hill ; *one of your enemies shall chase a thou-*
sand, and your whole army shall flee before five, till so few are left
that you shall stand alone, like a beacon on the top of a hill.
18 And therefore, *or nevertheless,* will the LORD wait, that he
may be gracious unto you, *will exercise patience toward you,* and

therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you, *and exalt his power and glory in humbling and reforming you ;* for the LORD [is] a God of judgment : blessed [are] all they that
19 wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem ; *or the people of Zion shall dwell at Jerusalem ; continue there in safety, notwithstanding Sennacherib's attempts ; and also afterward return out of Babylon thither again :* thou shalt weep no more : he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry ; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee ; *happy times shall succeed*
20 *the defeat of the Assyrians by Hezekiah's reformation.* And [though] the LORD give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers ; *though other afflictions may come, or some be continued, yet the priests shall come again to Jerusalem, (which they could not during the siege) and you shall have prophets and know how to value them :*
21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, *the admonitions of some faithful friend, the dictates of conscience, or the influence of the Spirit,* saying, This [is] the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn
22 to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold ; *you shall be resolved against sin and destroy the most valuable remains of idolatry, the robes and ornaments of your images, and the costly tents that were about them :* thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, *or polluted garment ;* thou shalt say unto it, *with an holy indignation,*
23 Get thee hence. Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, *or rain in seed time,* that thou shalt sow thy ground withal ; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous ; *the fruits of the earth shall be brought forth in great abundance :*
24 in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear, *or till* the ground, shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan ; *there shall be such plenty that the cattle shall eat*
25 *dressed corn, not corn in the straw.* And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers [and] streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall, *which the Assyrians had raised against Jerusalem.*
26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound ; *every thing shall put on a more cheerful face than before, when God pardons their sins and removes the punishment of them. Then follows a prophecy of the destruction of the Assyrians.*
27 Behold, the name of the LORD, *which the Assyrians have blasphemed by representing him like the gods of the heathen,* cometh from far, burning [with] anger, and the burden [thereof is] heavy ! his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a de-
28 vouring fire : And his breath as an overflowing stream, shall

reach to the midst of the neck, *like a great flood which shall destroy the whole army, and reach even to the king, he alone shall escape*, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and [there shall be] a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing [them] to err; *their allies shall be dispersed, they shall run upon their*
29 *own destruction, and all their designs be disappointed.* Ye shall have a song, as in the night [when] a holy solemnity is kept; *like that in the evening when the solemn feasts begin:* and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty one of Israel; *referring to the hymns after the passover, when they went up to the house of the Lord, and particularly when they brought the first fruits; so*
30 *shall you rejoice in the destruction of the Assyrians.* And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lightening down of his arm, with the indignation of [his] anger, and [with] the flame of a devouring fire, [with] scattering, and tempest, and hailstones; *it shall be done immediately by the hand of God, and probably was done in the manner here de-*
31 *scribed.* For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian
32 be beaten down, [which] smote with a rod. And [in] every place where the grounded staff, *or terrible stroke*, shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, [it] shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it; *they have been a rod to Israel, but they shall be destroyed with a strong conquering staff, and every place where they fall shall be*
33 *full of joy and gladness.** For Tophet *(a valley near Jerusalem, where they used to offer their children to Molech, and which Hezekiah had lately cleansed)* [is] ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; *that is, for the glory and strength of the king of Assyria*; he hath made [it] deep [and] large: the pile thereof [is] fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.†

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see here the vanity and guilt of creature dependence, and the necessity of trusting in God in times of danger. What pains and expense were the Israelites at to engage the assistance of Egypt! but it ended in their shame and disappointment. Thus men try one creature after another, in which they hope to find satisfaction and happiness; but they only add sin to sin, and trouble to trouble. Let us take a wiser course, and *make God our refuge*; return to him in the way of duty; labour to compose every tumultuous passion and anxious fear; avoiding

* Probably they made a procession with musical instruments and songs of praise to the Assyrian camp, as seeing it would enhance the joy and wonder of the people for their deliverance.

† Thereabouts the Assyrians were probably destroyed and their carcasses burned in that valley.

every sinful method to help ourselves, and seeking direction and help from the Lord of hosts. Thus will our strength be increased, our peace rendered secure, and *we shall never be ashamed of our hope.*

2. God's holiness is the great terror of sinners. The thought is too weighty, and the expression too serious, for men that choose to go on in their sin; for, if he be a holy Being, he must hate and punish those that are unholy. Hence they love those ministers that *prophesy smooth things*, that deal in generals, and give their consciences no alarm. But those that show them the evil of sin, preach searching sermons, and reprove their vices, they dislike. Yet faithful ministers must and will tell sinners, whether they like it or not, that God is an holy Being, *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*; and that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* It is better that they should be roused and displeased, than that they should be condemned for impenitence, and their ministers for unfaithfulness.

3. See what a blessing the means of grace are, and how highly they should be valued. God promises his people that though they should be afflicted, reduced to famine and straits, yet *they should have their teachers continued*; and those who know the value of the word, its instructions, warnings, and counsels, will look upon this as a great favour, sufficient to sweeten the bread of adversity; though it is to be feared that many had rather be without teachers and means of grace, than lose their substance, or be in straits. It is a blessing to have faithful friends, to admonish us, a tender conscience, that will check us when doing evil, and the spirit of God, to impress the warnings of the word and the convictions of conscience. We are all in danger of mistaking our way; of turning to the right hand or to the left; of going into one error or another; let us therefore reverence the word of God, esteem his faithful ministers in love, and attend to that friendly admonition, from whomsoever it comes, *This is the way, walk ye in it.*

4. With what joy should we celebrate our spiritual deliverances? The Israelites went with gladness and songs to celebrate their rescue from the Assyrians; and have we not much greater reason, *with gladness of heart*, to celebrate in the house of the Lord our deliverance from Satan, sin, and death; those enemies of our souls and their eternal welfare? Let us rejoice in it, and give God the glory of it; but *rejoice with trembling*, lest our enemies should gain the dominion over us, and drive us down to hell; of which Tophet was but a faint image, though our Lord chooses by it to describe the horrors of the infernal world, even that *lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

CHAP. XXXI, XXXII.

This prophecy is a continuance of the former. The first part of the thirty second chapter seems to refer to the beginning of Hezekiah's reign; from the ninth to the fifteenth verse, to the troubles in the middle of it; and the conclusion, to the prosperity of the latter end.

1 WO to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because [they are] many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the
2 LORD! Yet he also [is] wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evil doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity: *a severe irony; as if he had said, You boast of the wisdom of your politics, but God has some wisdom, and is as able to help as they, therefore to shew your folly he will punish you for your evil doings, and the*
3 *Egyptians your helpers for their iniquity.* Now the Egyptians [are] men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit; *they have no more strength and swiftness than common creatures, and are liable to be frighted, wounded, and destroyed:* when the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail
4 together; *but God is a surer defence.* For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, [he] will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof; *all the noise of the Assyrian army is no more to him than a parcel of shepherds shouting against a lion, whom they dare not go near, he minds it not, neither*
5 *looses his prey, nor carries it off with greater speed.* As birds flying *speedily to their nests to secure their young, or to drive away an enemy,* so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver [it; and] passing over he will preserve [it.] *It is the same word as is used for passing over the Israelites' houses in Egypt, and has reference to their former deliverance; Jerusalem shall first be reformed, and then saved.*
6 Turn ye unto [him from] whom the children of Israel have
7 deeply revolted. For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you [for] a sin; *though they were the work of your own hands, the materials valuable, and you had worshipped them, yet being the occasion of sin you shall cast them away.*
8 Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man, *who smites openly;* and the sword, not of a mean man, *who smites secretly,* shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword *of the angel,* and his young men, *or choice ones,* shall be
9 discomfited. And he, *that is, the king,* shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign,

which the angel shall wave over them as a mark of God's care of Jerusalem, or rather of any party of the Jews, however inconsiderable, saith the LORD, whose fire, *or altar,* [is] in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem; *where God is daily worshipped, and from whence fire shall come forth to destroy his enemies.*

1 CHAP. XXXII. Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,
2 and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; *referring to the protection, repose, and happiness they should enjoy in Hezekiah's reign, after the troubles in the reign of*
3 *his predecessors.* And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken; *the prophets shall deliver their message clearly and faithfully, and the people at-*
4 *tend to, understand, and obey it.* The heart also of the rash, *the hasty and thoughtless,* shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly; *rude and illiterate people shall understand divine things, and speak readily*
5 *concerning them.* The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said [to be] bountiful, *or honourable; a good judgment shall be formed of men; worthy, valuable persons shall be promoted, and others discountenanced; the reason of this is given*
6 *afterward.* For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail; *a vile person will show his iniquity by his practice, his profaneness against God,*
7 *and his cruelty to man.* The instruments also of the churl [are] evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right; *he will find some wicked men to be active in his evil designs, and by specious pre-*
8 *tences destroy the needy when he has a good cause.* But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand; *he will aim to do all the good he can, and shall be established in prosperity and reputation.*

9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech. *The women are ad-*
10 *dressed, because grown extremely delicate and luxurious, and least able to bear public calamities.* Many days and years, *or, as in the margin, many days above a year, or whilst the Assyrian invasion shall last,* shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the
11 vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip ye *of your ornaments,* and make ye bare, and gird [sackcloth] upon [your] loins; *or, as it may be rendered, upon your mourn-*
12 *ing breasts.* They shall lament for the teats, *for the loss of their cattle and milk,* for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.
13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns [and] briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy [in] the joyous city; *upon the playhouses, gaming houses, and taverns; the fenced cities of Judah*

shall be destroyed and laid waste, and they shall have no heart to follow their pleasures even in Jerusalem, while it is besieged:
14 Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left, *or, the city shall be forsaken of its multitude;* the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; *they shall have no heart to repair them again,*
15 *at least it will be a long time before it can be done;* Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, *till God shall send his spiritual influence to reform us,* and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest; *there shall be good times after the Assyrians are destroyed; the wilderness shall become so fruitful, that what was before reckoned fruitful shall*
16 *appear like a forest in comparison of it; or it may only denote a great and wonderful change.* Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; *right-*
17 *eous judgment shall be executed among the rich and poor in the city and country, in the cultivated lands and in the wilderness.* And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever; *the increase of*
18 *righteousness shall promote peace, harmony, and all good.* And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure
19 dwellings, and in quiet resting places; When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place, *or, utterly abased; there shall be no invasion from foreign enemies, but they shall be destroyed, and their cities laid low; or it*
20 *may signify, you shall be sheltered from the storm.* Blessed [are] ye that sow beside all waters, and send forth [thither] the feet of the ox and the ass; *you shall go out without fear of your enemies, to cultivate your land, and enjoy great plenty as well as peace.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW kind is God who invites sinners to return to him, and promises them protection and happiness! Those perverse people that trusted in Egypt and their own politics, and had affronted the only wise and powerful God, were invited to return, yea, though they had deeply revolted. Thus does God still address sinners, though their backslidings are great and aggravated, and long continued in; yet *if they turn to him,* he will receive and bless them. *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

2. See the happiness of a good prince, and a righteous government. This was designed to encourage Hezekiah in his reforming work, to teach the people how to value and improve the blessings which they enjoyed under him, and to give instruction to future kings and princes. Let us bless God that we have a king over us, who, we hope, will always *rule in righteousness,* be a covert to the persecuted and oppressed, advance the worthy and virtuous, discountenance and frown upon the wicked, and thus secure the reputation of religion, and promote the public peace. And let us pray

that this may be more and more his character; and the blessings here described, be the blessings of his reign.

3. It is a good sign, when men and things are called by their proper names; when *vile persons are not called liberal*, or gentlemen; and *churls*, men of a selfish, surly disposition, stiled honourable. It is happy for a nation, when only good things are called by good names; when virtue and virtuous men are esteemed, and held in reputation; when men are valued, not by their rank and titles, but by their beneficence and usefulness. If difference of character was not so wretchedly confounded as it is in our common language, and there was greater openness and plainness of discourse, it would tend greatly to the support of righteousness. Let us then emulate the character of a *citizen of Zion, in whose eyes a vile person is contemned, and who honoureth them that fear the Lord.*

4. Liberality is not the way to contempt and ruin, for *the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by them shall he stand.* He contrives how he may be able to do good; he retrenches superfluities, and saves needless expenses, not that he may hoard up wealth, but that he may do the more good. He endeavours to be as extensively beneficent as possible, and by his charity he shall stand; his prosperity shall be increased by the blessing of heaven; he shall be esteemed by men, have peace in his own mind, and obtain favour of the Lord; and he that does not think this an abundant equivalent for parting with his money, is a vile and churlish person.

5. We see the wisdom of being religious, *v.* 17. The pious shall enjoy peace, undisturbed by the crosses of the world. Religious exercises are pleasant; there is great satisfaction in reflecting upon them, and a gracious reward awaits them, even everlasting quietness and assurance. These inestimable blessings are only to be found in the way of righteousness; in that way therefore let us walk, and never turn aside from it.

6. Let us rejoice in the government of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the happiness of his faithful subjects, *ch.* xxxii. *v.* 1, &c. Though this has a primary reference to Hezekiah, yet it has also a reference to Christ, and the blessings of his gospel, as is common in the prophets. *He reigns in righteousness*, being himself perfectly holy, and his administration inflexibly just. He is a shelter and refreshment to his people in every storm. By his gospel, knowledge, holiness, liberality, peace, and joy are promoted and diffused. Let us show, by the practice of these virtues, that we have received its influence; and earnestly pray that the spirit may be poured forth from on high upon us, our churches, and all the world; that *the wilderness may be a fruitful field*, and the earth may become like the paradise of God above.

CHAP. XXXIII.

This chapter has a reference to the invasion and destruction of the Assyrians, and the happy effects of it to Israel.

1 WO to thee that spoilest, and thou [wast] not spoiled; and
dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously
with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled;
[and] when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they
shall deal treacherously with thee; *because thou hast broken the
treaty of peace, and endeavoured to spoil and conquer when no in-*
2 *jury had been received.* O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have
waited for thee; *the prayer of Israel in their distress:* be thou
their arm every morning, *the arm of Hezekiah and his soldiers,*
3 our salvation also in the time of trouble. At the noise of the
tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations
4 *that were allied to the Assyrians* were scattered. And your spoil
shall be gathered [like] the gathering of the caterpiller: as the
running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them; *that is,
the Israelites shall gather the spoil, as easily as locusts or caterpil-*
5 *lers devour a field or a tree.* The LORD is exalted; for he dwel-
leth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteous-
ness; *he displays his power, and the effect of it shall be reforma-*
6 *tion.* And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy
times, [and] strength of salvation; *piety and prudence shall
establish Hezekiah's throne:* the fear of the LORD [is] his treas-
ure; *the worship of God, and promoting piety in others, shall be a*
7 *better security than treasures or forces.* Behold, their valiant
ones shall cry without; *they shall be disheartened, and think it
in vain to oppose;* the ambassadors of peace, *that shall be sent by
Hezekiah to treat for peace,* shall weep bitterly, *because the As-*
8 *syrians will be so unreasonable, proud and insolent.* The high-
ways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the
covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man;
Sennacherib will not stand to his agreement, he will despise the
9 *fenced cities, and have no compassion.* The earth, *or the land,*
mourneth [and] languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed [and] hewn
down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel
shake off [their fruits;] *the fruitful parts will be laid waste, and*
10 *her substance plundered.* Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now
will I be exalted; now, *when things are at the worst, and the case*
11 *shall seem desperate,* will I lift up myself. Ye *Assyrians* shall
conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, *or an-*
12 *ger against Israel,* [as] fire, shall devour you. And the people,
the Assyrians, notwithstanding their great expectations, shall be
[as] the burnings of lime: [as] thorns cut up shall they be
burned in the fire; *they shall meet with entire destruction, like
stones burned to lime, or thorns that are utterly consumed.*
13 Hear, ye [that are] far off, what I have done; and ye [that
14 are] near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are

afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites, *who scorn the law of God and the threatenings of the prophet; though they keep up the appearance of religion, when they think the Assyrians will destroy Jerusalem, they shall be terribly afraid.* Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? *they will own how awful God is, and how dreadful when he comes to punish. On the other hand, good*
15 *men shall be calm and secure:* He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, *who thinks it beneath him,* that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, *when put into his hand secretly,* that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, *will not hear any scheme tending to shed blood, or to gratify revenge,* and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil, *will not willingly see evil committed, but has a great aversion*
16 *to it;* He shall dwell on high: his place of defence [shall be] the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters [shall be] sure; *he shall be defended and supplied during the*
17 *extremity of the siege.* Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, *that is, Hezekiah, having put off his sackcloth and appearing in his royal robes with a pleasant aspect:* they shall behold the land that is very far off; *the people who had been shut up during the siege shall travel abroad, which after their confinement*
18 *would be peculiarly pleasant.* Thine heart shall meditate terror; *review its former fears and its triumph over the Assyrians.* Where [is] the scribe? where [is] the receiver? where [is] he that counted the towers? *where is the secretary of war, the paymaster,*
19 *the chief engineer?** Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, [that thou canst] not understand; *that is, the Assyrians,*
20 *who had a deep, harsh language, carrying terror with it.* Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle [that] shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; *an allusion to a*
21 *tent, no part of which should be damaged by the enemy.* But there the glorious LORD [will be] unto us a place of broad rivers [and] streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby; *though there is no river about Jerusalem, only a little brook, God will be as a broad river to it, over*
22 *which no ship shall pass to hurt or destroy it.* For the LORD [is] our judge, the LORD [is] our lawgiver, the LORD [is] our king; he will save us; *God's relation to Israel will engage him to protect*
23 *it.* Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail; *the Assyrian force, when attempting to pass the broad river, mentioned v. 21, shall be shipwrecked:* then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey; *it shall be so abundant, that those who can*
24 *neither fight nor pursue shall have a part.* And the inhabitant

* The apostle Paul applies this to the success of the gospel over heathen powers and philosophy. 1 *Cor.* i. 20.

shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein [shall be] forgiven [their] iniquity; *they shall forget their sickness, for joy of this great deliverance, which will be a comfortable token that their sins are forgiven them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here shown the most effectual way to secure national deliverance and happiness, namely, *to continue instant in prayer*, *v*. 2. Let us entreat that all our actions and affairs may be governed by justice; that we may be faithful to our treaties; and that particular persons may act uprightly, support religion, and cherish the fear of the Lord. This is our best treasure, and will do more to defend us than all our forces.

2. We are taught not to despair when in the deepest distress. Jerusalem never was in so much danger. Its inhabitants were never so much terrified as at this time, *v*. 7, 8. *Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man. Now will I arise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted.* He seemed before to have been an unconcerned spectator; but then it was time to arise and act vigorously for them. God thus sometimes suffers his people to be brought into the lowest distress, that he may make his appearance more conspicuous, their deliverance more valued, and better improved. Let us therefore trust him in the greatest danger, and *in the mount of difficulty the Lord will be seen*.

3. The difference between bad and good men in times of affliction and calamity, is seen, *v*. 14, 15. There were hypocrites in Zion, and those of the worst sort. When they expected the city to be taken, plundered, and burned; though they made a jest of the threatening before, and were secure and careless, yet now they were struck with fear, and sunk into despair. Thus cowardly and uneasy does guilt make men. And no wonder if it affects the hypocrites under the gospel in this manner, when they think of those devouring flames and everlasting burnings, which are threatened against all the workers of iniquity. On the other hand, the good man, who fears God, gives all their due, and abhors every unjust, dishonourable, and mean action, is safe, courageous, and happy: God will protect him, and provide for him; and he will have a cheerful hope in the deepest distress. He will have no cause to complain of lesser evils when the greatest is removed, nor sink under the burden of sickness, when the burden of guilt is taken away. *Such shall walk in the light of God's countenance* here, and at length see the King of kings in all the beauties of the heavenly land.

4. Let us rejoice in God's care of the church amidst all its dangers and alarms. It is indeed desirable to have *the city of our solemnities a quiet habitation*, and God can make it so. It needs no river to keep off invading foes, no force to repel them; his al-

mighty power is sufficient. Let us think what he did for Israel, what he has done for his church, yea, for our own land. Let us review our fears, *v.* 18. and give glory to God for our national prosperity, success, and peace; and be careful to behave toward him, as those who know that *the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king: he will save us.* Let us commit our cause to him, and observe his law; then we may cheerfully trust in his protection, and be assured that *he will bless us.*

CHAP. XXXIV.

Some refer this chapter to the destruction brought upon the nations which bordered upon Israel, by the Assyrians and Babylonians: but I rather think it has a general reference to the destruction of all that opposed the kingdom and interest of God among men.

1 COME near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people:
let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and
2 all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD
[is] upon all nations, and [his] fury upon all their armies: he
hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the
3 slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, *they shall find no burial,* and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses,
and the mountains *about Jerusalem* shall be melted with their
blood; *it shall be shed in such quantities that it shall run down*
4 *like springs from the mountains.* And all the host of heaven
shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a
scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off
from the vine, and as a falling [fig] from the fig tree; *hyperboli-*
5 *cal expressions, denoting great desolation and confusion.* For my
sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon
6 Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.* The
sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, [and] with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the
kidnies of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a
7 great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall
come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls, and their
land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with
fatness; *both the greatest and the meanest shall be alike destroyed.*
8 For [it is] the day of the LORD's vengeance, [and] the year
9 of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams
thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into
brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch;
10 *an allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.* It shall
not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof, *a black,*

* Probably the ancients used to bathe their swords in some preparation which made them hard enough to take a sharp edge; thus God's sword is represented as bathed in heaven, in celestial fire, that it might strike like lightning. Idumea, or the Edomites, here, as in many other places, is put for all the enemies of God's church and people in general.

sulphureous vapour, shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for
11 ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones, *or plummet*, of emptiness; *he will deal with them in strict justice.*
12 They shall call the nobles thereof to *assist in managing the affairs of* the kingdom, but none [shall be] there, and all her princes shall be nothing; *they shall have no heart or spirit left.*
13 And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of drag-
14 ons, [and] a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there
15 and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate; *creatures that love desolate places, whether sandy or marshy, shall meet together, and breed there; intimating that the desolation shall be long continued.*
16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read; *let the prophecy be compared with the event, to show that not one of these dismal creatures shall be wanting;* no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them; *God hath so ordered it, and brought*
17 *them together by the instincts he hath given them.* And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: *these creatures shall have the land divided among them as if it was done by lot:* they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may reflect with pleasure on the righteousness of God, *when his judgments are abroad in the earth.* This dreadful hyperbolical description is answered by the desolations that war often makes in cities and countries; but let us rejoice that infinite wisdom and righteousness preside over these affairs. God's sword is the sword of justice, and *cometh for judgment*, v. 5. Desolation doth not proceed at random, but in strict equity; *by line and plummet;* it works as regularly as cities are built, and countries planted: even the wild beasts and birds have their share, as if divided by lot. Let this comfort our minds amidst the confusions of the earth; and lead us to adore the righteousness of the Lord, *who is holy in all his ways.*

2. How beautiful is it to observe the correspondence between history and prophecy, v. 16. The book of the prophets is *the book of the Lord*, inspired by the Holy Ghost. It is our duty to read it, to seek and search it out. Where we have light from ancient his-

tory, we shall see the prophecies exactly fulfilled; and where we have not history, we have reason to conclude that they were fulfilled, or will be so. The desolations which have been made, particularly by the Turks, upon the countries surrounding the holy land, the ruins of Babylon, Nineveh, and other great and populous cities in those parts, show that *God's counsel shall stand, and that his words shall not fall to the ground.*

CHAP. XXXV.

This chapter refers to the gospel, and the glorious change it should make in the state of the world.

1 THE wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them,
for the destruction of the enemy; and the desert shall re-
2 joice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and
rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall
be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they
shall see the glory of the LORD, [and] the excellency of our
God; *that is, spiritual blessings, described under these emblems,*
3 *shall abound.* Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the
4 feeble knees. Say to them [that are] of a fearful heart, Be
strong, fear not; *an address to the apostles and ministers of*
Christ: behold, your God will come [with] vengeance, [even]
5 God [with] a recompense; he will come and save you. Then
the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf
shall be unstopped, *which was literally done by Christ and his*
6 *apostles.* Then shall the lame [man] leap as an hart, and the
tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters
7 break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground
shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in
the habitation of dragons, where each lay, [shall be] grass with
reeds and rushes; *sandy places shall become good pastures; re-*
ferring to the influence of Christ's doctrine and spirit upon the
world, and especially to the change that should take place in the
8 *gentile nations.* And an highway, *or causeway,* shall be there,
and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the un-
clean shall not pass over it; but it [shall be] for those; *or, God*
shall be with them, shall be their guide and companion in the way;
therefore, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err [there-
9 in.] No lion shall be there, nor [any] ravenous beast shall go
up thereon, it shall not be found there; *all their spiritual ene-*
mies shall be vanquished; but the redeemed shall walk [there:]
10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion
with songs, *all shall terminate in heaven,* and everlasting joy upon
their heads; *as garlands of flowers were worn at feasts, so shall*
they wear a crown of glory: they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us rejoice in the happiness of Christ's kingdom, and the glory of the gospel. It has the brightest glories of the Mosaick dispensation, and some which are unspeakably greater and nobler. The miracles of Christ confirmed his doctrine, and were emblems of the effects of it upon the mind; the eyes of the understanding were enlightened, ignorant heathens were brought to know God, and Christ, and religion; obstinate wills were subdued; idolatry, slavery, polygamy, and other vices and miseries were banished, as far as that prevailed, and the spiritual enemies of men conquered. The glorious change it made in the state of the moral world is but imperfectly represented by these figures; but they ought to excite our thankfulness that we are favoured with this glorious dispensation, and that it hath already contributed so much to the happiness of mankind.

2. The view here given us of the way of religion, should engage us *to walk in it*. It is the way of holiness, of universal rectitude, purity, and goodness; a safe, plain, and pleasant way; there is no difficulty in finding it, no danger in walking in it. We meet there with the best company, and have God for our guardian and guide, our companion and friend. In this way then let us walk, and proceed therein with vigour and cheerfulness; strengthen our own and others' feeble knees, and encourage one anothers hearts. This delightful road will at length bring us to the heavenly Zion, where sorrow and sighing, where sin, corruptions, and enemies shall be no more; but *upon our heads shall be everlasting joy*, and in our mouths everlasting songs.

CHAP. XXXVI, XXXVII.*

1 NOW it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, [that] Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against
2 all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of
3 the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.
4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence [is]
5 this wherein thou trustest? I say, [sayest thou] (but [they are but] vain words) [I have] counsel and strength for war: now on
6 whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if

* These two chapters are the same as 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. to the end of *chap.* xix. and the reader is referred to the exposition and reflections upon those places.

a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so [is] Pha-
7 raoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him. But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: [is it] not he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?
8 Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be
9 able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horse-
10 men? And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this
11 land, and destroy it. Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand [it:] and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that [are] on the
12 wall. But Rabshakh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? [hath he] not [sent me] to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own
13 dung, and drink their own piss with you? Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear
14 ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able
15 to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall
16 not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make [an agreement] with me [by] a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and
17 drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn
18 and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. [Beware] lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of
19 the king of Assyria? Where [are] the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where [are] the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they
20 delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who [are they] among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?
21 But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for
22 the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that [was] over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with [their] clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

1 CHAP. XXXVII. And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard [it,] that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with
2 sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, who [was] over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah

3 the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus
saith Hezekiah, This day [is] a day of trouble, and of rebuke,
and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and
4 [there is] not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy
God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assy-
ria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will
reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: where-
5 fore lift up [thy] prayer for the remnant that is left. So the
6 servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said
unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the
LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, where-
with the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.
7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor,
and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the
sword in his own land.

8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria war-
ring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed
9 from Lachish. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of
Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when
10 he heard [it,] he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, Thus
shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy
God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem
11 shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold,
thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands
12 by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered? Have
the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have
destroyed, [as] Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children
13 of Eden which [were] in Telassar? Where [is] the king of
Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of
14 Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? And Hezekiah received the let-
ter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Heze-
kiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before
15 16 the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying, O
LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest [between] the cheru-
bims, thou [art] the God, [even] thou alone, of all the kingdoms
17 of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine
ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and
hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach
18 the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have
19 laid waste all the nations, and their countries, And have cast
their gods into the fire: for they [were] no gods, but the work
of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed
20 them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand,
that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou [art] the
LORD, [even] thou only.

21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying,
Thus saith the Lord GOD of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed
22 to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: This [is] the word
which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the
daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, [and] laughed thee to

scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.
23 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed; and against
whom hast thou exalted [thy] voice, and lifted up thine eyes on
24 high? [even] against the Holy One of Israel. By thy servants
hast thou reproached the LORD, and hast said, By the multitude
of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to
the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars there-
of, [and] the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the
25 height of his border, [and] the forest of his Carmel. I have
digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I
26 dried up all the rivers of the besieged places. Hast thou not
heard long ago, [how] I have done it; [and] of ancient times,
that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou
shouldst be to lay waste defenced cities [into] ruinous heaps.
27 Therefore their inhabitants [were] of small power, they were
dismayed and confounded: they were [as] the grass of the field,
and [as] the green herb, [as] the grass on the house tops, and
28 [as corn] blasted before it be grown up. But I know thy abode,
and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.
29 Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into
mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my
bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which
30 thou camest. And this [shall be] a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat
[this] year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that
which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and
31 reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. And the
remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take
32 root downward, and bear fruit upward: For out of Jerusalem
shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount
33 Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. Therefore
thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall
not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come be-
34 fore it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that
he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into
35 this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it,
for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.
36 Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the
camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thou-
sand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they
37 [were] all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria de-
38 parted, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it
came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his
god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with
the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and
Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

The first part of this chapter gives an account of Hezekiah's dangerous sickness and miraculous recovery; the latter part is a tender and beautiful song of thanksgiving, in which this pious king breathed out the sentiments of a grateful heart when his life was as it were restored.

1 IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death, *that is, of some distemper, which in the common course of nature would prove mortal.** And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house
2 in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,
3 And said, Remember, now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done [that which is] good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore, *from the apprehension that he should leave his kingdom*
4 *in distress, and without an heir.* Then came the word of the
5 LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, *whose family seemed to be in danger of extinction*, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy
6 tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of
7 Assyria: and I will defend this city. And this [shall be] a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing
8 that he hath spoken; Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.† So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

9 The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness; *or, a song of thanksgiv-*
10 *ing for his deliverance:* I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years; *being but about thirty nine years old, I might naturally*
11 *expect a longer life.* I said, I shall not see the LORD, [even] the LORD, in the land of the living, *in his house and ordinances; that is, no more join in or support his worship:* I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world; *I shall see my subjects and friends no more; I shall have no more opportunities of doing good to the public or myself; a sentiment full of piety and*
12 *benevolence.* Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent; *a weak, frail building, that is easily taken down or removed from place to place:* I have cut off like a weaver my life; *have given up all my schemes and prospects:* he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day [even] to night wilt

* This sickness happened in the space between Sennacherib's invasion and the destruction of his army.

† Probably an inflection of the rays of the sun, which continued for some time.

thou make an end of me ; *I thought this would be the case every*
13 *morning and evening.* I reckoned till morning, [that,] as a lion, so will he break all my bones : from day [even] to night wilt thou make an end of me ; *I thought the violence of my pain would destroy me before morning, like a lion breaking my bones.*
14 Like a crane [or] a swallow, so did I chatter : I did mourn as a dove ; *my voice was weak and broken, so that I could only sigh and bemoan myself :* mine eyes fail [with looking] upward ; *or rather, mine eyes are so weak that I cannot look up :* O LORD, I am oppressed ; undertake for me ; *I am sinking under this heavy affliction ; O Lord, appear for me, before death seizes upon me.*
15 What shall I say ? *an expression of God's great goodness, and of his own thankfulness ; how shall I find words to express my gratitude ?* he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done [it ;] *he promised health, and it immediately came :* I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul ; *I shall all my days remember the bitterness of my soul ; or it may refer to walking humbly and circumspectly be-*
16 *fore God after it.* O LORD, by these [things,] *thy power and goodness,* [men] live, *and I in particular,* and in all these [things is] the life of my spirit : so wilt thou recover me, and make
17 me to live ; *by thee I shall still be supported.* Behold, for peace I had great bitterness : but thou hast in love to my soul [delivered it] from the pit of corruption : for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back ; *thou hast forgiven my sins which brought this distemper upon me, and hast shown thy favour to me by thus*
18 *recovering me.* For the grave cannot praise thee, death can [not] celebrate thee : they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth ; *they cannot glorify thee on earth and serve mankind, or expect to see thy promises to thy church and people fulfilled.*
19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I [do] this day : the father to the children shall make known thy truth ; *they that have been recovered shall praise thee themselves, and relate thy goodness to their children, to encourage them to trust in thee.*
20 The LORD [was ready] to save me : therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD ; *not only this song, but other devout compositions ; not merely in one visit paid to the sanctuary, but as long as*
21 *my recovered life shall continue.* For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay [it] for a plaister upon the boil,
22 and he shall recover.* Hezekiah also had said, What [is] the sign, that I shall go up to the house of the LORD ? *that was the first place he designed to visit, and therefore he put the question with particular reference to it.*

* Perhaps these might have a natural virtue to ripen the imposthume, but could not heal it so soon without extraordinary interposition.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THIS chapter suggests many useful instructions to the sick and infirm; and such any of us may very soon be. We should therefore set our houses in order, make our wills, settle our affairs, and contrive for the peace of survivors. Especially should we set our souls in order; renew the exercise of repentance and faith, and make our peace with God, with men, and our own consciences. Let the sick pray, and humble themselves; acknowledge the hand of God in the visitation, and seek help from him; but they should not neglect the assistance of physicians and medicines, *lest they tempt the Lord their God.* Though Hezekiah's recovery was in a great measure miraculous, yet natural means were used, to teach us the use of them. Let us not think our fears of death signs of our being in a sinful state, for even Hezekiah wept sore at its approach, though he could appeal to God that *he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart, and had done that which was good in his sight.*

2. Those who have been recovered from sickness may see what should be their temper and conduct. It is proper to recollect, and keep written memorials of their danger and deliverance; of the workings of their thoughts and affections; their views of God, themselves, and another world; and of their resolutions and vows. Let them be very thankful for their escapes from death; remembering, that it was *the Lord that healed them,* that recovered them from the pit of corruption, when just sinking into it; they should express their thankfulness in their addresses to God, and in their conversation with others, for their encouragement. It should be our care to walk humbly with God; to proceed with caution and watchfulness in the way of duty; to be zealous for his honour, and diligent and serious in our attendance upon his ordinances. Hezekiah's love to God's house showed itself very remarkably during his sickness; he lamented his being deprived of attendance there, and resolved to frequent it constantly while he lived. Thus should we improve our recoveries from sickness, or our continued health; remembering, that life is short, and that *there is no knowledge, wisdom, or device, in the grave, whither we are all going.*

CHAP. XXXIX.*

1 AT that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he
2 had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that

* For the illustration and improvement of this chapter, see 2 *Kings,* xx. 12—19.

was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor
3 in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not. Then
came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him,
What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee?
And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto
4 me, [even] from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen
in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that [is] in mine
house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures
5 that I have not showed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah,
6 Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come,
that all that [is] in thine house, and [that] which thy fathers
have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon:
7 nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that
shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take
away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of
8 Babylon. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good [is] the word of
the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For
there shall be peace and truth in my days.

CHAP. XL.

We now come to the last part of Isaiah's prophecy, which is by much the most sublime and important. It contains many comfortable predictions of the restoration of the Jews from captivity, of the blessings of the gospel, and the conversion of the Jews in the latter days. But in this chapter, and in many other places, these events are so intermingled, that, though the general sense is plain, it is hard to determine to which event the prophet refers.

1 COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God;
that is, to the prophets during the captivity, and to all chris-
2 *tian ministers in future ages.* Speak ye comfortably to Jerusa-
lem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that
her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's
hand double for all her sins; *not double to what she deserved,*
but double in proportion to God's severity in correcting other sin-
ful nations, because she was more eminently favoured. It may
have a reference to the law of paying double damages, Exod. xxii.
4. Immediately a harbinger is introduced, giving orders as was
usual in the march of eastern generals, to remove every obstacle,
and prepare the way for their return into their own land.
3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye
the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for
our God; *probably referring to Cyrus's proclamation of deliver-*
ance to the Jews; or rather to the gospel salvation; and it is so
4 *applied to John the Baptist, Mat.* iii. 3. Every valley shall be
exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and
the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain;

all difficulties shall vanish; men's pride and prejudices shall be re-
5 *moved:* And the glory of the LORD, *his glorious power and goodness*, shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see [it] together:
6 for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it.] The voice said *to the prophet*, Cry, *or proclaim aloud.* And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh [is] grass, and all the goodliness thereof [is] as
7 the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the peo-
8 ple [is] grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever? *there is no dependence to be laid on the wisdom, power, and promises of men, but the promises of God are faithful, and nothing shall prevent the execution of them. So Peter applies the words in his first epistle, chap.* i. 23—25.

9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, *or, O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion*, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, *or, O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem*, lift up thy voice with strength; *proclaim aloud on the mountains, from whence thou canst best be heard;* lift [it] up, be not afraid, *for God will make his word good;* say unto the
10 cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong [hand,] *or, against the strong*, and his arm shall rule for him; *he will complete your deliverance, and establish the Messiah's kingdom, without human assistance:* behold, his reward [is] with him, and his work, *or, recompense for his*
11 *work*, before him. He, *that is, the Messiah*, shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [them,] *that is, the lame and sick*, in his bosom, [and] shall gently lead those that are with young.

12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? *To confirm your faith in these promises, observe the exact order in which the earth is formed; the mountains are weighed, the waters and the dust are measured; so that there is not a drop too much, nor a grain superfluous or defi-*
13 *cient; and say*, Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD *when*
14 *he made the world*, or [being] his counsellor hath taught him *to govern it?* With whom took he counsel, and [who] instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him
15 knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations [are] as a drop of a bucket, *as inconsiderable, when compared with the ocean, as a drop of water*, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; *so small, when compared with the whole earth, as not to affect the nicest scales;* behold, he taketh up the isles, as a very little thing; *the isles, though so spacious, strong, and deep rooted, are in his hand what a light thing*
16 *is in ours, which we take up, turn, and manage as we please.* And, *if we would study to present an oblation answerable to his great-ness*, Lebanon [is] not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof

17 sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations, *if they were assembled together to attend this great sacrifice*, before him [are] as
nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and
vanity. *To caution the Jews against the idolatry of the Chaldeans, he proceeds*, To whom then will ye liken God? or what
19 likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a
graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold,
20 and casteth silver chains *to adorn it, or fasten it to a pillar*. He
that [is] so impoverished that he hath no oblation *to offer to the temple, will yet have a god, and therefore he* chooseth a tree [that]
will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image [that] shall not be moved; *he thinks a*
21 *wooden god better than none*. Have ye not known? *even you, idolatrous Gentiles?* have ye not heard? hath it not been told
you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the
foundations of the earth? *have you not learned by observation, by reflection, by tradition from the earliest ages, that the great God Jehovah is the creator, and governor of the world, and of such in-*
22 *finite perfections, as not to be represented by any image?* [It is]
he that sitteth upon the circle, *or globe*, of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof [are] as grasshoppers, *the most inconsiderable insects:* that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, *or canopy*, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, *as easily as a man can open a curtain of a tent in the morning, and close it at night:*
23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of
the earth as vanity; *can easily confound, depose, and destroy the*
24 *greatest princes*. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall
not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth:
and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the
whirlwind shall take them away as stubble: *a beautiful gradation; they shall have no power; or, if they possess a little, yet they shall have no lasting root; or, if they should continue for a*
25 *while, yet he will blow upon them, and destroy them*. To whom
then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy
One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these
[things,] that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth
them all by names, *he is acquainted with them, and commands them, as a general does his army*, by the greatness of his might,
for that [he is] strong in power; not one faileth; *not one of them shall wear out, or need repairing, or fail to answer his pur-*
27 *poses*. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, *in thy captivity, saying*, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? *my affairs are perplexed,*
28 *and sunk, so that God cannot help me*. Hast thou not known
better than any other people? hast thou not heard, [that] the
everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth,
fainteth not, neither is weary? *he doth not, by length of time grow inactive, or negligent; though he delays, he neither wants ability nor power;* [there is] no searching of his understanding;

29 *no finding out the reasons of his dispensations.* He giveth power
to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increaseth
strength; *he gives abundance of strength, therefore can give it to*
30 *you in your affliction, though you are brought ever so low.* Even
the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall
utterly fall; *those of the best natural abilities, and who are most*
31 *confident in themselves:* But they that wait upon the LORD, *in*
the way of faith, diligence, and prayer, shall renew [their]
strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they
shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not
faint; *they shall grow stronger and stronger, surmount all diffi-*
culties, and obtain the blessings which they desire.

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is good to think of the difference between the glory and power of man, and that of God. All the glory of man is soon blasted, his power weak, his wisdom soon confounded, his beauty fading, and his promises fail; but JEHOVAH is the all wise and almighty God, faithful and true, and his word stands for ever. Let us imprint these thoughts upon our minds, that we may not be fond of the fading glories of this world ourselves, nor envy or admire them in others; but make God our portion, and his word our treasure; it will be a source of everlasting security and joy.

2. With what veneration ought we to think and speak of this great and glorious Being! We have here some of the sublimest descriptions of the Deity in the whole Bible. When we read or think of them, they should fill us with awful admiration of his supreme majesty; should engage us to worship him with the utmost reverence, since we are nothing, yea, less than nothing, in his sight; and to admire his condescension in giving his Son to be our saviour; the purposes of whose appearance are so important, and whose tenderness is so great.

3. It is frequently the case that those who can spare nothing for the service of God, can spare much for the service of their lusts. Those are remarkable words in *v.* 20. He who is so poor that he cannot afford a sacrifice for God's temple, can spare money to purchase an idol, of rich materials, and exquisite workmanship; and the rich will spare no cost upon their gods. There are many idolaters of this kind among us, who make their money, their pleasures, and their bellies, their gods. They care not what pains they take, or what expense they are at, in the worship of these deities, but are never at a loss for objections against charitable donations, nor backward to plead poverty, when any thing is wanted for the house or service of God. These will justly be condemned by the zeal and generosity of idolaters; and the account of their expenses will make a detestable figure, when God comes to reckon with them at the great day.

4. How firmly should we trust the promises of God, and how cheerfully should we wait upon him! In times of affliction we are

too apt to say, as *v.* 27. *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God.* We indulge many foolish fears, and often make ourselves uneasy, which would be prevented by considering who God is, and what he hath promised. We should learn to trust in him, and not in our own or in others' wisdom and strength. Let young men remember, that without divine help they will faint and be weary in their christian course; therefore wait upon God, and go forth in his strength: and let us all consider, that the more faithfully we employ what strength he gives us in his service, the more shall we find it increase. *The righteous shall hold on his way, and they that are upright in heart shall wax stronger and stronger.*

CHAP. XLI.

In this and some of the following chapters, God makes a solemn challenge to the worshippers of idols, to show such wisdom, power, and goodness in their gods as he possessed, in order to convince the Israelites of the folly of idolatry, and encourage their hope of deliverance from their captivity from him alone.

1 KEEP silence before me, O islands; and let the people
renew [their] strength, *that is, muster up all their arguments:* let them come near; then let them speak: let us come
2 near together to judgment. Who raised up the righteous
[man] from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made [him] rule over kings?* he gave [them]
as the dust to his sword, [and] as driven stubble to his bow.
3 He pursued them, [and] passed safely; [even] by the way [that]
he had not gone with his feet; *he shall pursue his enemies*
4 *through strange, unknown countries.* Who hath wrought and
done [it,] calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I [am] he *who order the several successions of princes, and the seasons of bringing about their*
5 *designs.* The isles saw [it,] and feared; *they were astonished at Cyrus's rising glory and victories;* the ends of the earth were
afraid, drew near, and came; *they joined in alliance to check his*
6 *growing greatness.* They helped every one his neighbour; and
7 [every one] said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, [and] he that smootheth [with] the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It [is] ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, [that] it should not be moved; *they sought help of their gods, and made*
8 *new ones to pray to.* But thou, Israel, [art] my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend; *be not*

* This is generally understood of Abraham; but it seems rather to refer to Cyrus, who is said, in prophetic language, to be raised up, that is, he should certainly be so: he is called righteous, because he was to execute God's righteousness in the destruction of Babylon.

9 *afraid of them, for I will defend thee.* [Thou] whom I have taken
from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men
thereof, and said unto thee, Thou [art] my servant; I have
chosen thee, and not cast thee away; *I will do it, and not cast
thee off, as thou hast reason to expect, for thy transgressions.*
10 Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for
I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;
yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteous-
11 ness; *by my power and faithfulness.* Behold, all they that were
incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they
shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.
12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, [even] them
that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be
as nothing, and as a thing of nought; *they shall be brought to*
13 *utter destruction.* For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right
hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee; *I will guide*
14 *and strengthen thee.* Fear not, thou worm Jacob, [and] ye
men of Israel, *though weak, despicable, and trampled upon;* I
will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, *I who have
delivered, and am still faithful, even* the Holy One of Israel.
15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument
having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat [them]
small, and shalt make the hills as chaff; *that is, the greater and*
16 *lesser kingdoms that oppose thee.* Thou shalt fan them, and the
wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter
them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, [and] shalt glory in
17 the Holy One of Israel. [When] the poor and needy seek
water, and [there is] none, [and] their tongue faileth for thirst,
I the LORD will hear them, [I] the God of Israel will not for-
18 sake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in
the midst of the vallies: I will make the wilderness a pool of
water, and the dry land springs of water; *I will supply the cap-
tives in their return from Babylon: an allusion to what was done*
19 *for the Israelites in the wilderness.* I will plant in the wilderness
the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I
will set in the desert the fir tree, [and] the pine, and the box
tree together; *I will make the face of nature beautiful; there
shall be trees both to shelter and refresh them; intimating that*
20 *there should be a glorious alteration in their circumstances.* That
they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together,
*that they may help one another to understand the divine dispensa-
tions, and* that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the
Holy One of Israel hath created it; *that God alone hath done it,*
21 *and no other.* Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth
your strong [reasons,] saith the King of Jacob; *challenging*
22 *idolaters and their gods to declare and do what he had done.* Let
them bring [them] forth and show us what shall happen: let
them show the former things, what they [be,] that we may
consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us
things for to come; *let them foretell future events, and inform us*

what prophecies they have delivered that have been accomplished.
23 Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may
know that ye [are] gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we
may be dismayed, and behold [it] together, *that we may be struck*
24 *with astonishment at such skill, and be led to worship you.* Be-
hold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomina-
tion [is he that] chooseth you; *that is, he that worshippeth you.*
25 I have raised up [one] from the north, and he shall come:
from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name, *or pro-*
*claim my name:** and he shall come upon princes as [upon]
26 mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. Who hath declared
from the beginning, *as I do, two hundred years before the event,*
that Cyrus shall conquer some nations and deliver others, that we
may know? and beforetime, that we may say, [He is] right-
eous, *in declaring truth and fulfilling his promises, and thus hath*
supported his claim to divinity: yea, [there is] none that show-
eth, yea, [there is] none that declareth, yea, [there is] none that
27 heareth your words. The first [shall say] to Zion, Behold, be-
hold them; *I am the first who have said unto Zion, Behold thy de-*
liverers, in Cyrus and his army: and I will give to Jerusalem one
that bringeth good tidings, *which none of their gods can give.*
28 For I beheld, and [there was] no man; even among them, and
[there was] no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could
29 answer a word. Behold, they [are] all vanity; their works
[are] nothing: their molten images [are] wind and confusion;
they are ignorant and impotent gods, that can neither do any thing,
nor foretell what shall be done.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see that the cause of God and religion will bear a fair trial, and need not fear it. This chapter is a challenge to idolaters to produce proofs of the divinity of the gods they worshipped, or disprove that of JEHOVAH. The servants of God may give the same challenge to the enemies of revelation, either to show it to be false, or produce any other religion of equal evidence and usefulness; and good men may challenge the workers of iniquity to produce their strongest reasons in favour of vice, assured that they will carry their own confutation with them. Let us never be afraid to have our religious principles and practices fairly examined; for if they are true and right, they will gain honour by the trial. Let us *be ready to give to every one that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.*

2. Let us learn to stir up one another to oppose prevailing vices, and to engage the favour of God. We see how the nations joined to oppose the growing reputation and success of Cyrus, and encouraged one another to make new gods to take their part; and shall we

* Cyrus by his father was from Persia, which lay east of Babylon, and from Media by his mother, which lay north.

not, with equal zeal, oppose the kingdom of Satan, and the progress of his arts of mischief and destruction? Shall we not encourage each other to act vigorously for the defence and honour of God and religion, and stir up one another to pray that God would support and advance his own cause? Let us learn wisdom from these idolaters; appear on the Lord's side, and strengthen one another's hands in God.

3. Amidst all the difficulties and troubles of life, let us take encouragement from God's promises; especially that in *v.* 10. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee.* We assuredly know, that it has afforded support and comfort to many souls, in the most afflicted circumstances, and even in dying moments. What beautiful and tender language is it! the language of an indulgent parent teaching a little child to go. Whoever forsakes us, God will be with us; whatever difficulties surround us, he will strengthen us; whatever enemies attack us, he will help us; when faint, trembling, and ready to sink, he will uphold us with the right hand of his righteousness. Though we are weak as worms, and, like them, despised, yet *our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, will help us*, Let us *wait on the Lord then, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen our hearts.*

4. Let us learn the vanity of idols, and keep ourselves from idolatry. See what ignorant, impotent things all gods are, but JEHOVAH. Let us reverence him who revealeth secrets, foretelleth things to come, does good and permits evil, and gives us in his works, providence, and word, a thousand proofs that he is the true God, and the everlasting King. *Let us therefore, dearly beloved, flee from idolatry;* worship the Lord our God with a veneration and affection suited to his greatness, power, and knowledge; and make him our hope and our confidence; for *he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.*

CHAP. XLII.

This chapter refers to the appearance of Christ, the publication of his gospel, and his judgment brought upon the Jews for their unbelief. The prophet makes a natural transition from the deliverance of the Jews out of captivity, to the greater deliverance by the Messiah, by which all their idols should be destroyed; and he here seems to drop the veil, and bring the Messiah into full view, without type or allegory. St. Matthew expressly tells us, chap. xii. 18—21. *that the beginning of this chapter was fulfilled in Christ: they are the words of the Father speaking to him.*

1 BEHOLD my servant, whom I uphold, *protect, and make my peculiar care:* mine elect, [in whom] my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judg-

ment to the gentiles ; *he shall make known to them my will and*
2 *law, which hitherto had been appropriated to the Jews.* He shall
not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street,
as vainglorious and contentious persons do ; he shall not come in a
pompous tumultuous manner, but instruct others and vindicate
3 *himself with meekness.* A bruised reed shall he not break, and
the smoking flax shall he not quench ; *a proverbial expression*
for a gentle temper and conduct : more is implied than expressed ;
he will bear with, encourage, and help the weakest : he shall bring
forth judgment unto truth ; *he shall make truth and righteousness*
4 *victorious.* He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set
judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law ; *he and*
his apostles shall go on resolutely and cheerfully, till his religion shall
be established, and the gentiles shall receive it as heartily as if they
had waited for it.
5 Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and
stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which
cometh out of it ; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it,
and spirit to them that walk therein, *and who therefore can cer-*
6 *tainly fulfil all his promises :* I the LORD have called thee in
righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and
give thee for a covenant of the people, *that is, for the mediator of*
my covenant to the people, and for a light of the gentiles ; *to en-*
lighten their minds, sanctify their hearts, and lead them to everlast-
7 *ing life ;* To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners
from the prison, [and] them that sit in darkness out of the
8 prison house ; *to deliver the captives of sin and satan.* I [am]
the LORD : that [is] my name : and my glory will I not give
to another, neither my praise to graven images ; *I will not suffer*
9 *idolatry any longer to prevail, but abolish it by the gospel.* Behold,
the former things are come to pass, and new things do I de-
clare ; *the former prophecies are fulfilled, and therefore these shall*
be so ; before they spring forth I tell you of them, *that they may*
be believed and expected. Then follows a poetical address to all
the inhabitants of the world, the most rude and barbarous not
excepted, to rejoice, and praise God for the gospel.
10 Sing unto the LORD a new song, [and] his praise from the
end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is there-
11 in ; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness
and the cities thereof lift up [their voice,] the villages [that]
Kedar doth inhabit : let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let
12 them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give
glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.
13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up
jealousy like a man of war ; *he was silent while idolatry prevail-*
ed in the world, and winked at those times of ignorance ; but now
he shall cry, yea, roar *like a lion, or as soldiers do when beginning*
14 *a battle ; and* he shall *entirely* prevail against his enemies. I
have long time holden my peace ; I have been still, [and] re-
frained myself : [now] will I cry like a travailing woman ; I

will destroy and devour at once, *like wild beasts, which come roar-*
15 *ing upon their prey and swallow it up at once.* I will make waste
mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will
16 make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.* And I
will bring the blind by a way [that] they knew not; I will lead
them in paths [that] they have not known: I will make dark-
ness light before them, and crooked things straight; *I will re-*
move the ignorance, errors and prejudices of men. These things
17 will I do unto them, and not forsake them. They shall be turn-
ed back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven im-
ages, that say to the molten images, Ye [are] our gods; *idol-*
aters shall be disappointed and ashamed upon the spread of the
gospel.
18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see; *an ad-*
dress to the gentiles to receive the gospel, and not reject the means
19 *of knowledge.* Who [is] blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my
messenger [that] I sent? who [is] blind as [he that is] perfect,
and blind as the LORD's servant? *There is no people on earth so*
blind and obstinate as the Jews; those to whom I have sent my
20 *message: or it may refer to their priests.* Seeing many things,
but thou observest not; *art not affected with them;* opening the
ears, but he heareth not; *God's law and wonders he pretended*
21 *to hear, but did not.* The LORD is well pleased for his righteous-
ness' sake; *or rather, The Lord took delight in this people for his*
righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make [it]
22 honourable.† But this [is] a people robbed and spoiled; [they
are] all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison
houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil,
and none saith, Restore; *though they had been punished for their*
23 *former sins, yet they continue perverse.* Who among you *cap-*
tives will give ear to this? [who] will hearken, and hear for the
time to come, *so as to take notice of and remember it, before fur-*
24 *ther calamities come?* Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to
the robbers, *to the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Romans?* did not the
LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not
walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law; *let*
none then flatter themselves with hope of impunity if they reject the
25 *Messiah.* Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his
anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire
round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid
[it] not to heart; *a threatening of worse judgments to the Jews in*
Christ's time, who should continue unreformed and incorrigible.

* As spiritual blessings are described by the opposite images, this intimates his great wrath and the vengeance that shall be brought upon the enemies of his gospel.

† This may be rendered, *He gave them excellent laws, and thereby made them honourable:* or, *God will magnify his righteousness and law, by executing the threatenings of it.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE coming of Christ, and the publication of the gospel, should be matter of universal joy and praise. Let us trace the view here given us of him as the delight of God's soul; his servant, whom he will protect and own; who was furnished with the Spirit without measure; as coming on the kindest design, to rescue the gentiles from ignorance, idolatry, and other vices; establishing a kingdom of truth, righteousness, and peace; and administering it in the most meek, gentle, and gracious manner. How justly are the nations called upon to sing unto the Lord and celebrate his praises! Let us bless God that this gospel is sent to us gentiles; and declare his praise in this highly favoured land.

2. There is often the greatest ignorance and stupidity found among God's professing people, though they enjoy the best means of knowledge, and even boast of them. How many among christians may be said, like the unbelieving Jews, to be *blind* and *deaf*; ignorant of the scriptures, and the way of salvation which they teach; yea, this is the case of some, who set up for teachers of others, and pretend to be perfect in knowledge. Many professing christians will take no pains to search and study the scriptures; will not retire and reflect upon what they have heard in public; they will not hear *for the time to come*. Hearing may be some present amusement to them, but they will not hear so as to reform their errors, regulate their conduct, and prepare for eternity. The greater is their sin and shame, and the heavier will be their condemnation, for neglecting to improve such signal advantages.

3. Sin is the cause of national calamities, and this ought seriously to be *laid to heart*, v. 25. When this is the case with our own land, is it possible there should be any so stupid as not to know this, or, knowing it, not to consider that *the Lord does it*, and that he does it because men are disobedient to his law? It is sad indeed when men suffer by public calamities, and yet will not lay it to heart; will not humble themselves before God, and comply with the designs of his providence. Let us guard against this insensibility of spirit, lest we provoke God to bring upon us greater evils, and pour upon us the strength of battle; for *who can stand in his sight when once he is angry?*

CHAP. XLIII.

This chapter contains comfortable promises that God would not forsake Israel as a body; and he renews his expostulation with them for their ingratitude and neglect of his service.

1 BUT now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, *who made thee his own nation, and in the constitution of thy government showed thee par-*

ticular favour, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have call-
2 ed [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine. When thou passest through the waters, I [will be] with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; *I will bring thee safe through the greatest dan-*
3 *gers and difficulties.* For I [am] the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy saviour: I gave Egypt [for] thy ransom, *I chose rather that Egypt should be destroyed than thee*, Ethiopia and Seba for thee; *turning Sennacherib's army against them,*
4 *rather than let him ruin Judah.* Since thou wast precious in my sight, *whilst thou didst behave well*, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore I will give men for thee, and
5 people, *other nations, especially the Chaldeans*, for thy life. Fear not: For I [am] with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east,
6 and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; *those who are*
7 *dispersed in Babylon and other countries*; [Even] every one [that is] called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, *to manifest my glorious attributes*, I have formed him; yea,
8 I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears, *that is, let the worshippers of idols*
9 *plead their cause.* Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and
10 say, [It is] truth, *that I am the only God.* Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen; *that is, Christ with his apostles, and all the holy prophets*: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after
11 me. I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me [there is] no
12 saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when [there was] no strange [god] among you; *I have proved my omniscience by declaring things to come, and my omnipotence by saving you; and have done all this before there was any idolatry in Israel, so that no strange god can have done it for you*: therefore
13 ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I [am] God. Yea, before the day [was,] *before all time*, I [am] he; and [there is] none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

14 Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent, *that is, I will send*, to Babylon, and have brought, *that is, will bring*, down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry [is] in the ships; *who glory in the number of their ships, and their great traffic; or, whose cry will be to their*
15 *ships to carry them away when the city shall be taken.* I [am] the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.
16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a

17 path in the mighty waters; Which bringeth forth the chariot
and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down to-
gether, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched
as tow; *referring to their deliverance from Egypt; your enemies*
18 *shall be quite destroyed, and have no power remaining.* Remember
ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old;
the deliverance I am about to grant is so great, that it shall eclipse
19 *the former and obscure the memory of them.* Behold, I will do a
new thing; now it shall spring forth *suddenly;* shall ye not
know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, [and] rivers
20 in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dra-
gons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness,
[and] rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my cho-
sen; *they shall have direction and defence where they least expect-*
21 *ed it, as Israel had in going through the wilderness.* This
people I have formed for myself; they shall, *or they should,* show
22 forth my praise. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob;
23 but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought
me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou
honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to
serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense: *I*
24 *have required nothing hard or unreasonable.* Thou hast bought
me no sweet cane, *or incense,* with money, neither hast thou
filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; *the fat of which was of-*
fered to the Lord; that is, thou hast neglected sacrifices, or brought
only lean ones: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins,
to undergo a sort of bondage, and brought a reproach upon me and
my service, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. *Yet, in-*
25 *stead of utterly destroying thee,* I, [even] I, [am] he that blotteth
out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remem-
ber thy sins; *but observe, it is for mine own sake that I will do*
26 *this.* Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare
thou that thou mayest be justified; *if I have forgotten any of thy*
27 *good deeds, remind me of them, I will do thee full justice.* Thy first
father, *thy ancestors,* hath sinned, and thy teachers have trans-
28 gressed against me. Therefore I have profaned the princes of
the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to re-
proaches; *I have suffered the Chaldeans to profane, pollute, and*
destroy the priests and Levites, to overthrow your constitution in
church and state, and make Israel a reproach and a proverb among
the nations.

REFLECTIONS.

1. GOD's presence with his people is a reason against anx-
ious fears. He often calls upon Israel not to fear; and
promises *to be with them.* He may see good to lead us, as he did
Israel, through the water and fire, that is, great and heavy afflic-
tions, that are ready to overwhelm us, and in which there is no hope
of deliverance; but he will be with us. Let us exercise faith in
his promises, follow his leadings, and trust in him to deliver.

2. Our relation to God demands a suitable behaviour from us. He hath created us as men; formed us as Britons, into an excellent constitution; redeemed us as christians, and shown his love by giving his Son for our ransom. And why has he done all this for us, but that we might *show forth his praise?* Let us then do it with our lips and by our lives; adore his glorious perfections; proclaim them to others; and live as the formed and redeemed of the Lord. Let us often recollect our relation and obligations to him, that we may live answerable to them, and *show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

3. God's service is so reasonable and so easy, that we shall be shamefully criminal and inexcusable if we neglect it. He appeals to Israel concerning this. The incense and sacrifices he required, were no more than they could very well afford, considering their plenty and prosperity. Our religious rites are fewer and easier to be observed; therefore our conduct will be more reproachful if we neglect them. He does not make slaves of us by them, nor weary us with them; he is so good a master, his work is so reasonable, so easy, and so honourable, that if we neglect it and grow weary of it, we shall be most ungrateful to him, and destroy our own souls. Let us therefore *not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit serving the Lord.*

CHAP. XLIV.

This chapter, beside promising redemption, the effusion of the Spirit, and the success of the gospel, sets forth in a very sublime manner the supreme power and foreknowledge of the one true God; exposes the folly and absurdity of idolatry with admirable force and elegance; and concludes with mentioning the future deliverer of the Jews expressly, by his name Cyrus, near two hundred years before he was born. See Ezra i. 2.

1 YET now hear, O Jacob, my servant, and Israel, whom I
2 have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, [which] will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, *that is, Israel, (signifying an upright and holy people, see Deut.* xxxii. 15.) whom I
3 have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed *to cure them of their idolatry,* and my blessing upon thine
4 offspring; *all spiritual blessings under the gospel:* And they shall spring up [as] among the grass, as willows by the water courses; *as plants and herbs do in green and fruitful meadows.*
5 One shall say, I [am] the LORD's; and another shall call [himself] by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe [with] his hand unto the LORD, and surname [himself] by the name of Israel; *they shall desire to be joined to God's people. While othe-*

ers wear the mark of the beast on their right hands, (Rev. xiii. 16.) *they shall mark their hands with the name of Jehovah; an allusion to a custom among soldiers, who sometimes received a mark*
6 *upon the hand, to signify to what commander they belonged.* Thus saith the LORD the king of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I [am] the first, and I [am] the last; and beside me
7 [there is] no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? *that is, Israel; no other nation can trace their history so high:* and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them; *heathen idols cannot do this, therefore I am to be fear-*
8 *ed, trusted, and worshipped, and not they.* Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, *when ye became my people,* and have declared [it,] *or foretold what should befal you?* ye [are] even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, [there is] no God; I know not [any.]
9 They that make a graven image [are] all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they [are] their own witnesses *against themselves; yet* they see not, nor know; *so* that they may be ashamed, *as they have just cause to be of their folly in*
10 *worshipping such senseless things.* Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image [that] is profitable for nothing? *who can be so foolish and brutish as to account that to be a god, which*
11 *himself has made, and is good for nothing?* Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they [are] of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; [yet,] *when combined in the greatest multitude,* they shall fear, [and] they
12 shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint; *the god he is making cannot prevent his being tired with his work, or give*
13 *him meat or drink.* The carpenter stretcheth out [his] rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, *for he knows no no-*
14 *bler creature;* that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest; *useth some art to make it straight and beautiful:* he planteth an ash, *which is of quicker growth,* and the rain doth nourish [it;] *think-*
15 *ing it will make the better god because it is of his own planting.* Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth [it,] and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth [it;] he maketh it a
16 graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire, with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth [himself,] and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire; *he puts the other parts to the uses which Providence intended, and enjoys the comfort of*

17 *them.* And the residue thereof he maketh a god, [even] his
graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth [it,]
and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou [art] my
18 god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut
their eyes, that they cannot see; [and] their hearts, that they
cannot understand; *they will not use their understanding, and*
19 *therefore God gives them up to their delusions.* And none con-
sidereth in his heart, neither [is there] knowledge nor under-
standing to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea, also I have
baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and
eaten [it:] and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination?
shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? *so destitute are they of*
20 *common sense.* He feedeth on ashes; *on that which hath no nour-*
ishment, and which disappoints him: a deceived heart hath turned
him aside, *prevents him from reasoning and reflecting,* that he
cannot deliver his soul, nor say, [Is there] not a lie in my right
hand? *he not only cannot deliver his soul from this wicked-*
ness, but he cannot see that he is cheating himself and playing the
fool.

21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel, *when you come to live*
among idolaters; for thou [art] my servant: I have formed
thee; thou [art] my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be for-
22 gotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy trans-
gressions, and as a cloud, thy sins; *that is, as a cloud is dispersed*
before the sun and the wind: return unto me; for I have re-
23 deemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done
[it:] shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into sing-
ing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the
LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel; *let*
all nature be joyful for the restoration of Israel, and the spread of
that gospel which is designed to turn men from these vanities.

24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee
from the womb, I [am] the LORD that maketh all [things;] that
stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the
earth by myself, *therefore can save thee without any other god:*
25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners
mad; *the magicians and astrologers of Babylon, who foretell the*
lasting felicity of that city and empire; that turneth wise [men]
26 backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirm-
eth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his
messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited;
and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up
27 the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry,
when he delivered Israel out of Egypt, and I will dry up thy
rivers; *alluding to the expedient used by Cyrus in taking Babylon,*
28 *viz. diverting the river Euphrates from its channel:* That saith
of Cyrus, *near two hundred years before his birth,* [He is] my
shepherd, *he shall gather my people together, and lead them as a*
shepherd doth his flock, and shall perform all my pleasure;
though he may have different schemes, yet he shall fulfil my designs.

even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is a very pleasing thing to see young people giving themselves up to the Lord, and joining themselves to his church. What gracious promises are those in the third, fourth, and fifth verses! It bodes well to the happiness of the rising generation, and the support of religion, when young persons take the vows of God upon them; yield themselves to him, to be entirely and for ever his; and unite themselves to christian churches to walk with them in all the ordinances of the Lord. It is a good security for their future regular behaviour, their usefulness and comfort. Let young persons then be engaged to give themselves to the Lord and to his church; and let all, especially parents, earnestly pray for the communications of the spirit, which are necessary to excite them to self dedication, and to promote their fruitfulness in every good work.

2. How prone are men to deceive themselves concerning the plainest truths and the most important concerns! Did not scripture and common history confirm the truth of it, one would scarcely believe, that men could be so stupid and brutish as to worship idols: not that they supposed them to be gods, but they thought they were just resemblances of God, though they had no qualities to answer that character; or believed they had some divine power lodged in them; which seems to have been the notion of the vulgar; so wretchedly stupid were men grown. And there are two many idolaters yet remaining among us; who worship silver and gold, (for *covetousness is idolatry,*) or who *make a god of their belly.* They please themselves with the expectation of happiness in these things; but there is a lie in their right hand, and they find nothing solid to support their souls upon. And thus many are also deceived in those things in which they trust for salvation. We should therefore often put this question to ourselves, 'Am not I deceived? is this not a lie in my right hand?' and should beg of God to search and try us, and *see if there be any evil way in us.*

3. The promises and hopes of pardon demand our warmest gratitude and joy. What a blessing is it to have our sins forgiven and blotted out! that cloud which separates between God and man, and intercepts the light of his countenance, dispersed! All nature is called upon to rejoice in the gospel promises of forgiveness; they are the best tidings to guilty creatures: and if we have any reason to believe our sins and iniquities are forgiven, our souls should for ever adore the grace of God, who is ready to forgive, and of Jesus Christ, through whose blood we receive the remission.

* It would encourage the Israelites in Babylon when they heard of Cyrus's name, as they did long before his conquest of that empire. This remarkable prophecy has justly engaged the admiration of heathens, as well as christians, and gives at once a strong and sublime idea of God's omnipotence and foreknowledge.

4. We learn from the whole chapter, what high and venerable thoughts we should entertain of the great God. We should think seriously and reverently of him, as the eternal Jehovah; the first and the last; as an omniscient Being, to whom future contingencies are known. He by his prophet foretold that Jerusalem and the temple should be destroyed; and named Cyrus, as the man that should deliver his people, and rebuild his temple. We should also adore him as an almighty Being, who maketh what use of princes he pleaseth, and can remove every hindrance to the execution of his purposes. Idols cannot do this, but our God can; let us therefore ever fear, reverence, and trust him; for whatever devices there are in the heart of man, *his counsel shall stand*, and the most powerful princes shall only execute his pleasure.

CHAP. XLV.

In this chapter we have Cyrus's commission against Babylon, and to restore the Jews; an account of his success, with suitable admonitions to the Israelites.

1 THUS saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdu- nations before him; *or whom I hold fast by the right hand, that I may subdue nations before him;* and I will loose the loins of kings, *weaken their power*, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates
2 shall not be shut; *that is, the gates of Babylon within the city, leading from the streets to the river, which were providentially left open when he surprised the city;* I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; *remove all difficulties and obstructions:* I will break in pieces the gates of brass,* and cut in sun-
3 der the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, *the secret wealth of princes and people*,† that thou mayest know that I the LORD,
4 which call [thee] by thy name, [am] the God of Israel.‡ For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name *Cyrus:* I have surnamed thee, *my*
5 *shepherd and anointed*, though thou hast not known me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me: I girded thee *with authority and power*, though thou hast
6 not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else; *intimating that the deliver-*

* Babylon had an hundred brazen gates.

† Cyrus had subdued rich Cresus and other nations before he took Babylon; and that was a most wealthy place; the treasures which he found there and in Sardis, amounted to one hundred and twenty six millions two hundred and twenty four thousand pounds sterling.

‡ Josephus says that this prophecy was showed to Cyrus, and that he was much affected with it; he therefore honestly acknowledges, *Ezra* i. 2. The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth.

ance of the Jews by Cyrus would promote the knowledge of God
7 *through many nations.* I form the light, and create darkness:
I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things;]
8 *I am the supreme governor of the natural and moral world.** Drop
down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down
righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth sal-
vation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD
have created it: *being determined to bring about their salvation,*
all nature shall seem to unite in promoting it. I will first shower
down righteousness, and then produce salvation; Israel shall first
9 *be reformed, and then delivered.* Wo unto him that striveth
with his Maker; *wo to the Babylonians that shall oppress Israel,*
and strive against God; or to the Israelites that shall distrust his
power, and will not believe his promises. [Let] the potsherd [strive]
with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that
fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no
10 hands? *he hath no ability or skill, or acts as if he had none.* Wo
unto him that saith unto [his] father, What begettest thou? or
to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? *much more to the*
11 *great Parent of the universe.* Thus saith the LORD, the Holy
One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come con-
cerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands com-
mand ye me; *you may humbly inquire concerning these things;*
or rather (as the Seventy) Will you question me, or give me a
12 *law?* I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I,
[even] my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their
host have I commanded, *and therefore I am able to fulfil my*
13 *promises.* I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will di-
rect all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go
my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.
14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour, *or wealth,* of Egypt, and
merchandize of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature,
shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall
come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall
fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee,
like submissive captives, [saying,] Surely God [is] in thee;
15 and [there is] none else; [there is] no *other* God.† Verily
thou [art] a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Sa-
viour; *though thy providence in afflicting and delivering is often*
dark and mysterious, yet thou art the God of Israel and the Sa-
16 *viour.* They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of
them: they shall go to confusion together [that are] makers
of idols, *though they unite their attempts to support the credit*
17 *of their deities.* [But] Israel shall be saved in the LORD with

* This is designed to expose the notions of the ancient Persians, who held that there were two independent principles or beings, the one good, and the other evil, by which all things were made, and who were represented by light and darkness.

† Cyrus, having conquered Egypt and part of Arabia, assisted the Israelites to rebuild and beautify the temple out of the spoils of those nations; and many became proselytes, and were brought to acknowledge the only true God, when they saw that he appeared so wonderfully for the Jews.

an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor con-
18 founded world without end, *to the ages of eternity.* For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; *much less then will he suffer Judea, his own inheritance to lie desolate:* I [am]
19 the LORD; and [there is] none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; *another proof that I am Lord alone, I have revealed my will plainly by the law and the prophets; not like the heathen mysteries, that were carefully concealed from the vulgar; nor like the oracles that were uttered with a hollow, muttering voice from holes and caves:* I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain; *I answered the prayers of my people, which idols could not do:* I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right; *my laws are just, my answers direct, and my promises are faithful, but theirs are not.*

20 Assemble yourselves and come, *ye recovered Jews;* draw near together, ye [that are] escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray
21 unto a god [that] cannot save. Tell ye, and bring [them] near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? [who] hath told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD? and [there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me; *let them consult together to produce an instance of foretelling such future*
22 *events, and maintain the cause of their idols.* Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; *ye Jews, wherever dispersed, and ye gentiles, when ye shall hear my gospel:* for I [am]
23 God, and [there is] none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, *that is, profess allegiance: many nations shall become my worshippers and servants, and at length all the world, and at the day of the last judgment every creature shall be subject to me;*
24 *Rom.* xiv. 11. Surely, shall [one] *and another, that is, all those that shall be converted from idolatry, whether Jews or Gentiles,* say, In the LORD have I righteousness and strength: [even] to him shall [men,] *that is, Israel, the church and people of God,* come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.
25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel, *all converted Jews and believing Gentiles,* be justified, and shall glory, *that is, be pardoned, and boast of their relation to him.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see the design of God in his various dispensations to the church and world; in his dealings with Israel and other nations. He can set up kingdoms, and pull them down; raise up Cyrus, from a low beginning, to conquer great and mighty nations, and to deliver Israel. The design was, to bring Cyrus to know

him, and the nations round about to acknowledge his supremacy and to worship him; as well as to cure the Jews of their idolatry: and were we as well acquainted with the history of other nations, as with that of Israel, we should see the same design carried on in the revolutions of states and kingdoms, and the great events of the world.

2. We see the danger of impatience and murmuring under the rebukes of Providence, and during the delay of mercies. What awful woes are denounced against those who strive with God! who impeach the wisdom and equity of his providence, and fret against him! And this is certainly very absurd and impious; for he is a Being of almighty power, whose counsel shall stand, and who *will do all his pleasure*. It is as absurd, as for the clay to quarrel with the potter; and as indecent and wicked, as for a child to find fault with his parents, because he was not begotton an angel, or of such a particular complexion or stature. Let us guard against this disposition, especially in seasons of affliction; remembering, that God is infinitely above us; that he makes light and darkness, good and evil, and has set one over against the other. Though he may sometimes seem to hide himself, yet *he is the God of Israel*, and *the Saviour*. Let his Israel therefore hope in the Lord, from this time forth and for ever.

3. The hint that is given in *v.* 18, should raise our ideas of the grandeur of God's works, and of the number of his rational creatures. *He created not the earth in vain; he formed it to be inhabited*; intimating, that if it were not inhabited it would have been created in vain. And from hence we may fairly argue, that the other planets are inhabited by rational creatures as well as ours; though we know nothing of their particular rank and nature. This appears to be a just, noble, and delightful thought; and gives us a high idea of the greatness, magnificence, and goodness of God. It may be part of the delightful employment of good men, when they leave this earth, to travel from world to world, to learn more of God's works and creatures, that they may for ever love and adore him.

4. Let us rejoice that *in the Lord we have righteousness and strength*, and look to him for them. In and through the Lord Christ we christians have them; we Britons, from the ends of the earth are invited to look unto Christ, and be saved; to look with an eye of faith and love, and humble confidence. In him we have righteousness for the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance of our services; strength to overcome temptations and to bear afflictions. In him we may be justified; acquitted from guilt and condemnation; and in him we ought to glory; to triumph in our relation to him, and our interest in him. To him therefore let our knees bow, and our souls submit; and let *the life we live in the flesh be by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us*.

CHAP. XLVI, XLVII.

Lest the Israelites should be led to worship the idols of Babylon, or fear their power, God here shows their vanity, and foretells that they should be carried captives.

1 BEL boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, *the favourite gods of Babylon,** their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages [were] heavy loaden; [they are]
2 a burden to the weary [beast.] They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity; *these gods shall be led away, and, so far from delivering their worshippers, shall be a grievous weight to the*
3 *weary beasts that carry them.* Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne
4 [by me] from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And [even] to [your] old age I [am] he; and [even] to hoar hairs will I carry [you:] I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver [you;] *I formed you into a state, brought you out of Egypt, and protected you; and I will take the same care*
5 *of you still.* To whom will ye liken me, and make [me] equal,
6 and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, [and] hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.
7 They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, [one] shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer
8 nor save him out of his trouble.† Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring [it] again to mind, O ye transgressors,
9 *who have been guilty of idolatry.* Remember the former things of old, *what I have done for your nation formerly:* for I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is]
10 none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, *foretelling the most casual events*, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; *some have been accomplished, and others shall be*
11 *so, particularly your deliverance by Cyrus:* Calling a ravenous bird, *or, as it should be translated, an eagle*, from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country, *that is, Cyrus; who had an eagle for his ensign;*‡ yea, I have spoken [it,] I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed [it,] I will also do
12 it. Hearken unto me, ye stout hearted, that [are] far from
13 righteousness, *or deliverance; namely, the stubborn Jews, who thought that God would not deliver them:* I bring near my right-

* Bel signifies *lord*, and Nebo *prophet*; they were deified men, and the names of their princes were formed out of them, as Belshazzar, and Nebochadnezzar, &c.

† God often reminds them of the inability of idols, because they were in great danger of idolatry.

‡ Cyrop. vii. sub. init.

eousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory; *or, as it may be better rendered, I will give salvation to Sion, and my glory to Israel; I will prove the truth of my promises, and Sion, shall still be saved.*

1 CHAP. XLVII. Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground;* *she shall sit on the bare ground, be reduced to the most abject state:* [there is] no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called
2 tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers; *you, that is, the Babylonians, shall be made slaves, shall labour at the most toilsome work, be forced to fly, and wade through rivers; all of which must be very mortifying to those who used to*
3 *ride in state, and live delicately.* Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet [thee as] a man, *whom thou mayest fly from, or*
4 *resist.*† [As for] our redeemer, the LORD of hosts [is] his name, the Holy One of Israel; *he will speak comfort to Israel, and terror to the Chaldeans. A chorus of the Jews, in which they*
5 *break out in the midst of the prophecy to praise God.* Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms;
6 *the largest and most powerful empire.* I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient,
7 *or aged,* hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.‡ And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: [so] that thou didst not lay these [things] to thy heart, *that is, the injuries done to my people,* neither didst remember the latter end of it; *the instability of human affairs, and the consequences of pride and selfconfidence.*
8 Therefore hear now this, thou [that art] given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I [am,] and none else beside me; I shall not sit [as] a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children; *I am supreme in power and*
9 *dominion, and fear no danger:* But these two [things] shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, [and] for the great abundance of
10 thine enchantments.‖ For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I [am]

* Babylon had never been taken, and therefore is called a virgin.

† Or, *I will suffer a man to intercede for thee.* Lowth.

‡ This prediction is the more remarkable, as there was no difference at present between Judah and Babylon; they had sent compliments to Hezekiah, which had the appearance of friendship, yet they are here spoken of as their most barbarous enemies.

‖ When Babylon was besieged by Darius, they were so resolute in holding out, that they destroyed all their wives and children in one day, to cut off all unnecessary mouths. *Prid. Con.* vol. i. p. 188.

and none else beside me; *thou thoughtest thy policy so deep that*
11 *it could not be defeated.* Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, [which] thou shalt not know; *which thou shalt neither be aware of, nor know how to remedy; and so it was, for Cyrus took Babylon at midnight, in the*
12 *midst of their mirth and security.* Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to
13 profit, if so be thou mayest prevail, *to divert thy calamities.* Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, *who pretend to foretell future events by the stars and aspects of heaven,* stand up, and save thee from [these things] that shall come upon thee.
14 Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: [there shall] not [be] a coal to warm at, [nor] fire to sit before it; *they shall be utterly destroyed, like whole magazines of coal burnt at once, which must give a great heat, but destroy the winter stores.*
15 Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, [even] thy merchants from thy youth, *thy negociators and astrologers, and all that contributed to thy wealth and grandeur:* they shall wander every one to his quarter, *turn to his own business;* none shall save thee.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE promise to Israel, in *v.* 4. affords abundant comfort to every aged christian, that God will be the same God to them as ever; will bear, and carry, and deliver them, amidst all their dangers and infirmities. He who made them, and has been the guide of their youth, will be the support of their old age! It becomes them therefore *to thank God, and take courage.*

2. Men never act like rational creatures till they renounce their sins, and become the servants of God, *v.* 8. It is desirable that men should act as men; use their rational powers aright, and employ them upon their proper objects. This would lead them to repentance and amendment of life; and by acting as reasonable creatures, they would soon become religious ones; but while they are giddy, thoughtless, and inconsiderate, there is no hope of them.

3. We see in the forty seventh chapter how soon God can humble and mortify the most delicate. What a melancholy change was it to the tender and delicate Babylonians, when led captive, and treated as slaves, with all the horrors of poverty and disgrace! how mortifying to those who had lived in ease and pleasure! May we be taught by it to guard against excessive tenderness and delicacy, as not knowing to what afflictions and hardships we may be appointed; which will be peculiarly heavy if we have unreasonably indulged the flesh.

4. The almighty power of God makes him a most formidable enemy. Those are awful words in *v.* 3. *I will not meet thee as a man*, from whom thou mightest flee, whose power thou mightest resist, or evade his justice, or move his compassion to spare thee. See *what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.* While the wicked tremble to meet him as their Judge, let his people rejoice in him as their Redeemer, whose perfections are all engaged for their happiness.

5. See how soon God can strip men of all their comforts, and learn not to be proud of them. So he did by Babylon. He can uncover their locks, strip persons of their jewels and ornaments; of the wealth in which they trust, and in consequence of which they think they shall see no sorrow. He can bereave them of their children, and bring upon them family distresses in their perfection. He can deprive them of the knowledge which they are proud of, and in which they boast. Let us lay this to heart; remember the uncertainty of all earthly possessions, and never be proud of them or fix our affections too strongly upon them. Let us employ our wealth and abilities for God; consider our comforts as his gifts, that we may adore and glorify the Giver. Let us never addict ourselves to pleasure, nor dwell carelessly, lest God take away our comforts; and *for all these things bring us into judgment.*

CHAP. XLVIII.

God having by the prophet reproved and threatened the Chaldeans in the former chapters, here proceeds to show his people their sins.

1 HEAR ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by
the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters
of Judah, *or, that flow from the fountain of Judah, his posterity,*
which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of
2 the God of Israel, [but] not in truth, nor in righteousness. For
they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon
the God of Israel; *rely on their external privileges, but are not*
sincere in their profession; the LORD of hosts [is] his name.
3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and
they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them; I did
[them] suddenly, and they came to pass; *I foretold future*
events, and brought them to pass unexpectedly, or at the precise
4 *time.* Because I knew that thou [art] obstinate, and thy neck
[is] an iron sinew, *which will not bend,* and thy brow brass, *which*
5 *will not blush; therefore, to leave thee without excuse,* I have
even from the beginning declared [it] to thee; before it
came to pass I showed [it] thee: lest thou should say, Mine
idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten
6 image hath commanded them. Thou hast heard, see all this;
and will not ye declare [it?] *ye have heard my predictions, and*

seen their accomplishment, and will ye not openly acknowledge this? I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them; *particularly your de-*
7 *liverance by Cyrus.* They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them; *I have given you new prophecies concerning your captivity and deliverance, lest*
8 *you should say, My own sagacity discovered these events.* Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time [that] thine ear was not opened; *or rather, nor was thine ear opened of old; that is, thou wast not taught these things formerly:* for I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb; *or that, apostate, was thy name from thy birth;* thou wast early given to idolatry, and hast*
9 *retained an affection to it ever since.* For my name's sake will I defer, *or suppress,* mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain
10 for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; *but thou art not as silver, there is yet too much dross left;* I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;
11 *by afflictions I have made thee more fit for my choice.* For mine own sake, [even] for mine own sake, will I do [it;] *lest the gods of the heathens should be thought more wise and powerful than I:* for how should [my name] be polluted, *or blasphemed?* and I will not give my glory unto another.
12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I [am]
13 he; I [am] the first, I also [am] the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: [when] I call unto them, they stand up together; *they are ready, like servants, to execute my orders,*
14 *therefore I can deliver thee.* All ye *Israelites* assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them, *which of their gods or oracles,* hath declared these [things?] the LORD hath loved him, *hath chosen Cyrus and fitted him for the work:* he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm [shall be on] the Chaldeans;
15 *his army, and God's hand with it, shall destroy them.* I, [even] I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him,
16 and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there [am] I; *or, before the time that this was, I am the eternal God, and see every thing before me in its succession:* and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath
17 sent me *his prophet, to foretell these things.* Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I [am] the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit *by thy afflictions,* which leadeth thee by the way [that] thou shouldst go; *that is, lead-*
18 *eth thee out of thy troubles.* O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea; *thou shouldst not have*

* Lowth.

gone into captivity, but a succession of blessings should have flowed upon thee one after another; thy peace and prosperity should have
19 *been uninterrupted and abundant:* Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; *numerous as the sands, or like the fishes of the sea;* his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me; *whereas now they shall be greatly diminished by their calamities, and few of them shall return from Babylon.*

20 *Yet, notwithstanding this,* Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, *not with silence and amazement, but* with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it [even] to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.
21 And they thirsted not [when] he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out; *he will supply them in their return, as he did their fathers in their journey through the*
22 *wilderness.* [There is] no peace, saith the LORD unto the wicked; *though the wicked share in the blessings of their deliverance, and return with them, yet they shall have no lasting peace; they will still have reason to look upon God as their enemy, amidst all their prosperity.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here taught the vanity and insufficiency of external privileges, without real piety. The Jews boasted of their name, their relation to God and Abraham, and the holy city, *but not in truth nor in righteousness.* Thus many among us think it sufficient to salvation that they are called christians, enjoy many privileges above others, belong to the church, and enjoy gospel ordinances; yea, they mention the name of God and Christ, and boast in them, without truth and righteousness. But this is gross hypocrisy, a high affront to God, and taking his name in vain: for no religion is of any avail that is not founded on sincerity.

2. We see the nature and advantage of afflictions. They are designed to prove and refine the sufferers, to reform them from their vices, to purify their hearts, and increase their graces. Afflictions are sometimes the means of beginning, and often of carrying on a good work in the soul; and it should be the desire of those who are afflicted, to get good thereby; and in order to that they should earnestly pray that God would *teach them to profit* by his chastisements; for *he intends them for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.*

3. We see the advantage of hearkening to God's commands; that is, of being attentive to them, studying the nature and extent of them, and sincerely obeying them: this is the way to enjoy uninterrupted tranquillity and happiness. God is desirous we should do this; *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!* v. 18. a high expression of his kindness to his creatures, and his willingness

to save sinners. *All that the Lord our God says to us, therefore, let us hear, and be obedient.*

4. Whatever peace and prosperity any church or nation enjoys, *there is no peace to the wicked;* they can never be in a state of peace and favour with God, nor can they have any solid, lasting peace of conscience, or well grounded hope of everlasting peace. They can take no reasonable encouragement from God's promises to his people, however confidently they may rely upon them. Though they are joined to God's people in appearance, and in external communion, yet they have no title to their special privileges. But *let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn to the Lord;* then *peace, and all good, will come unto them.*

CHAP. XLIX.

The beginning of this chapter principally relates to Christ and the covenant of redemption, and the deliverance he should work out for the church, as illustrated by the deliverance of the Jews.

1 LISTEN, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name; *he hath spoken of me by John the Baptist, and other holy*
2 *men, as the Saviour of the world.* And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow, *or hollow* of his hand hath he hid, *or defended* me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; *referring to the wisdom and eloquence of Christ, and the power of his gospel to penetrate the hearts of men;*
3 And said unto me, Thou [art] my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified, *in whom Israel shall be glorified; or, I will be*
4 *glorified in Israel.** Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; *I have been rejected by the Jews, and few of them have believed:* [yet] surely my judgment [is] with the LORD, and *the reward of* my work with my God.
5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb [to be] his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, *God will testify his affection and approbation,* and my God shall be my strength; *he will carry me through all my sufferings.*
6 And he said, It is a light thing, *comparatively,* that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, *though all of them should believe and be saved:* I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that, thou mayest be my salvation, *the author and instrument of salvation,*
7 unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the LORD, the redeemer

* Some think Christ is called *Israel,* as God's servant, and the representative of the church.

of Israel, [and] his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, *Pilate and Herod*, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, *shall submit to him and become christians*, because of the LORD that is faithful, [and] the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee, *and so prove that he is faithful to his promises, and that thou*
8 *art his chosen*. Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; *I have heard thy prayer, and assisted thee in thy work:* and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, *to be the surety and mediator of the new covenant*, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; *to establish good laws, and repair what is decayed by ignorance and corrup-*
9 *tion;* That thou mayest say to the *spiritual* prisoners, Go forth; to them that [are] in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures [shall be] in all high places.
10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them; *they shall have plenty of the means of grace, and security and hap-*
11 *piness under the Redeemer's government*. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted; *the roads which are sunk and become impassable shall be raised and repaired; that is, God will so order things in the course of provi-*
12 *dence, as to help and further the progress of the gospel*. Behold, these shall come from far, *from Babylon, which lay east:* and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim, *from Pelusium, to the south.*
13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted; *let the whole cre-*
14 *ation rejoice in the prospect of this event*. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my LORD hath forgotten me. *The language of the Jews in captivity; as if they had said, what hope can we have of such a time, when at present we are so af-*
15 *flicted and sunk? God graciously answers*, Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget; *a remarkable change of persons, they may forget, some, yea, many may*, yet will
16 I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of [my] hands; *the thoughts of thee are as familiar to my mind, as if thy name was written there;** thy *broken* walls [are] con-
17 tinually before me. Thy children, *or elders*, shall make haste *to return home, and build thee up again;* thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee, *be driven far away,*
18 *see v.* 19. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these

* This alludes to a custom in the east of inscribing the names of the dead, or of absent friends, or their native country, by some indelible mark on their hands or arms. Thus the pilgrims that went to the holy sepulchre had themselves marked; and this art is practised by travelling Jews all over the world at this day.

gather themselves together, [and] come to thee. [As] I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them [on thee,] as a bride [doeth:] *mothers consider their children as their greatest ornaments, so the purity and piety of christians shall be an ornament to the church.**

19 For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabi-
20 tants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place [is] too strait for me:
21 give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these *and educated them, so that they come with dispositions to be the beauty, strength, and glory of the church?* Behold, I was left alone; these, where [had] they
22 [been?] Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, *I will beckon them, and they shall come,* and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in [their] arms, and thy *young* daughters shall be carried upon [their] shoulders; *they and their children shall eagerly come, and*
23 *be joined to the church.* And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; *they shall become good themselves, and be the protectors of religion and liberty:* they shall bow down to thee with [their] face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; *they shall do honour and pay deference to the church of Christ;* and thou shalt know that I [am] the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? *An objection made by the Jews to their deliverance from captivity, without being ransomed or excharged. To*
25 *which God answers,* But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children; *my almighty power shall*
26 *effect this.* And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine; *the nations that join with Babylon shall contend with and destroy one another:*† and I the LORD [am] thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE have great reason to rejoice in Christ's commission to save the Gentiles. This sublime description is addressed to us of these isles, *for to us is the word of his salvation*

* The following verses are generally interpreted of the Jews; but their land was never so populous after the captivity as before; they had not the whole land of Canaan, as in Solomon's time. I therefore think it refers to the accession of Gentile converts.

† Cyrus conquered some countries which were in alliance with the Chaldeans, and then made use of their soldiers in his attack upon Babylon.

sent. This great and populous nation is become christian; has been enlightened by the sun of righteousness; we enjoy plenty of the means of grace, and are directed in the way to eternal life. Let us then adore the grace that has been afforded us, and say, as in *v.* 13. *Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.*

2. It is no new thing for faithful ministers to complain of their want of success. They labour, take pains, and are diligent in their work, spend their health and strength in endeavouring to do good; yet little good is done. It is a most discouraging circumstance; but it was the case with our Master, though *never man spake as he did*; and this is our encouragement, as it was his, that *our work is with the Lord, and our reward with our God: He will not forget it*; but will proportion his reward, not to our success, but to our fidelity.

3. *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.* This is the apostle's remark on *v.* 8. See 2 *Cor.* vi. 2. God heard and assisted his Son, that he might execute his work, and preach reconciliation. Therefore, while the gospel sounds in our ears is the time when we may be accepted, and the day when we may be saved. Let us therefore attend to it; for when our time on earth ends, there is no other accepted time, no other day of salvation, *Today therefore if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

4. Let us admire and trust in the compassion of God to his people in their distresses. That is a most beautiful, tender and delightful image in *v.* 14. It is next to impossible that a woman should forget her sucking child, or even the son of her womb; though she is more likely to forget the child she bore, than the child she suckles. But they may forget; mothers may prove monsters, and be unnatural to their children; as those are who wickedly destroy them, or even send them to be suckled by strangers when they are able to do it themselves. But God will not forget his church in its lowest distress, nor his people, though they may sometimes, through long affliction, be ready to despair.

5. Let us encourage ourselves to expect the continuance and enlargement of the church. There are many delightful promises in this chapter, of its spread among the gentiles, of kings becoming holy and zealous, and of numerous converts being added to it. Let this excite our prayers for the propagation of the gospel, and our thankfulness when any are added to the church, and especially those that are a peculiar ornament and credit to it. Though many difficulties seem to lie in the way, an almighty God has engaged that they shall be surmounted; and therefore *they shall not be ashamed that wait for him.*

CHAP. L.

This chapter is a vindication of God's dealings with his people; and concludes with an exhortation to trust in God and not in ourselves.

1 THUS saith the LORD, *O ye captives,* Where [is] the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? *representing the jewish church as their mother, and alluding to the power which husbands had to put away their wives, God inquires for the bill of divorce, in which the reasons would appear why they were rejected:* or which of my creditors [is it] to whom I have sold you? *An allusion to persons when oppressed with debt selling themselves, or their children, to their creditors, as was frequently done among the Jews, see* 2 *Kings* iv. 1. *and Matt.* xviii. 25. *but this, says God, cannot be my case; I am not urged by any such necessity; I am not in debt to the Chaldeans or Romans.* Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away; *you sold yourselves for the gratification of your lusts, and were put away for your own folly*
2 *and wickedness.* Wherefore, when I came, [was there] no man? when I called, [was there] none to answer? *if it were not so, why did you refuse my offers, and despise and abuse my messengers, especially my own Son?* Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because [there is] no water, and dieth for thirst; *I have the same power as I ever had, therefore it was not*
3 *owing to me that you were not delivered, but to your sins.* I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering; *a reference to the Egyptian darkness, Exod.* x. 21. *The Messiah is then introduced as speaking in his own name.*

4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to [him that is] weary: he wakeneth morning by morning: he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned; *or rather, as learners or scholars; (an allusion to a master calling up his scholars and servants in the morning;) as if he had said, God reveals his will to me, and*
5 *gives me ability to instruct and comfort the afflicted.* The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back; *he hath instructed me in the discharge of my office, given me to understand why I must suffer; and I was will-*
6 *ing to do what he required.* I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face
7 from shame and spitting.* For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; *not be overborne by my enemies, nor disappointed in my work and of my hope:* therefore have I set my face like a flint, *I am bold and courageous,* and I
8 know that I shall not be ashamed. [He is] near that justifieth

* These great indignities Christ suffered patiently, *Luke* xviii 31, 32. *Matt.* xiv. 65 xv. 19.

me; *God is at hand to vindicate my innocence;* who will contend with me? let us stand together: who [is] mine adversary? let him come near to me; *I challenge him to a judicial process.**

9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who [is] he [that] shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up; *Herod, Pilate and the wicked Jews, the persecutors of Christ, shall be destroyed. The following verse is addressed to every humble christian.*

10 Who [is] among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh [in] darkness, and hath no light? *though he suffers hardships, and is exercised with afflictions, and doubts, and fears,* let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God; *upon the goodness of God, and his faithfulness to his covenant. On the other hand, confusion and destruc-*

11 *tion are threatened to proud sinners.* Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass [yourselves] about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks [that] ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow; *an allusion to a benighted traveller, who lights a little fire to warm himself by, and thereat kindles a torch to proceed on his journey; but it goes out, leaves him in darkness, and exposed to many dangers; so those who seek their happiness in worldly comforts, and neglect God, or trust in the merits of their own righteousness, shall be disappointed.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here taught that it is men's own sin that undoes them. This the Jews are reminded of in the beginning of the chapter; their own iniquities brought their calamities upon them. When sinners are destroyed by acts of divine justice, it is owing to their own wickedness. God takes no pleasure in their destruction; he is as ready to pity and help as ever he was: but if they will not regard the message of his Son, and comply with the demands of his gospel, their destruction will be upon their own heads; they might have been saved, but would not.

2. It is the duty of christians, like their Master, to be willing to learn and to suffer. It is especially the duty of ministers to seek of God the tongue of the learned; that rich experience of divine things, and ability to speak comfortably to mourning souls, which is a better qualification than the largest store of human learning and philosophy. Let christians in private stations of life learn from their Master to apply their minds to understand divine things, and the will of God; to read his word, and attend upon his ministers, as men awake, and willing to learn, shaking off drowsiness, and taking pains to understand and remember. And let us earnestly pray against a drowsy distracted mind; and that God would awaken us

* This was literally fulfilled in Christ, who by signs and wonders, and a voice from heaven, and especially by his resurrection from the dead, was vindicated from all accusations.

and keep us attentive. So likewise we should be willing to suffer whatever Providence calls us to; setting our faces like a flint, as Christ did; being bold, resolute, and undaunted in the work of religion; and by divine help we shall not be borne down by opposition, but God will justify and accept us. The apostle probably refers to verse 8, when he says, (*Rom.* viii. 32.) *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?*

3. Let us carefully observe the difference between a humble trusting in God, and a vain confidence in ourselves. Those who fear God, and obey the voice of Christ, his servant, and who comply with the terms of his gospel, may walk in darkness and have no light; they may have many doubts and fears, and want spiritual peace and joy. But let them trust in a good and faithful God, and he will at length restore them to light and joy, which shall endure for ever. On the other hand, those who walk in the light of their own fire, seek their happiness in earthly things, trust to their own righteousness, or some sudden flashes of zeal and affection, may amuse themselves for a while, and seem full of light, hope, and joy, but will soon lie down in sorrow. The darkest state of a saint is therefore infinitely preferable to the brightest state of a sinner.

CHAP. LI.

The design of this chapter is to encourage the Jewish captives to trust in God's promises; especially in those relating to Christ; assuring them that he would pity their misery and help them; having given sufficient proofs of his power in his former dealings with that nation.

1 HEARKEN to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock [whence] ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit [whence] ye are digged; *re-*
2 *member your small beginning and low estate.* Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah [that] bare you: for I called him alone, *when a single person, who had no family,* and blessed him, and increased him; *therefore am able to do great things for*
3 *you still.* For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of
4 melody. Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation, *or, O ye nations, that is, ye Gentiles:* for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest, *or*
5 *rather, to break forth* for a light of the people. My righteousness [is] near: my salvation is gone forth, *the time is at hand when I will perform my promises,* and mine arms, *that is, my power,* shall judge the people: the isles shall wait upon me,

and on mine arm shall they trust; *I will reward my faithful*
6 *subjects, and punish my enemies.* Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart [is] my law, *who love it and obey it;* fear ye not the reproach of men, *of wretched men,* neither be ye afraid of their
8 revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool, *or, a woollen garment:* but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. [Art] thou not it that hath cut Rahab, *that is, Egypt,* [and] wounded the drag-
10 on, *that is, destroyed Pharaoh?* [Art] thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?
11 (*Exod.* xiv. 21.) Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy [shall be] upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; [and] sorrow and mourning shall flee away; *the captives shall return to Canaan, and a church of God be gathered out of Jews and Gentiles.*

12 I, [even] I, [am] he that comforteth you: who [art] thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man [that] shall die, and of
13 the son of man [which] shall be made [as] grass; and forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where [is] the fury of the oppres-
14 sor? *it is ineffectual, vanished, and gone at once.* The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail; *he shall quickly be loosed and not die; neither shall his bread fail; and the reason*
15 *follows;* But I [am] the LORD thy God, that divided the sea,
16 whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts [is] his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou [art] my people; *that I may disperse the clouds which hinder the light of the sun, moon, and stars, or even produce new constellations, or a new world. Grand and beautiful figures, to express a wonderful scene opening, and great prosperity to be restored!*

17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs, *the most bitter and nauseous part,* of the cup of trem-
18 bling, [and] wrung [them] out. [There is] none to guide her

among all the sons [whom] she hath brought forth: neither [is there any] that taketh her by the hand of all the sons [that] she hath brought up; *no human power can restore her prosperity.*
19 These two [things] are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword; *that is, desolation by famine, and destruction by the sword:* by whom shall I comfort thee? *who shall lament for thee in such*
20 *pathetic strains as thy case requires?* Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God; *they are languishing, and yet are quite furious and desperate; as was*
21 *the case when the city was taken and destroyed.* Therefore hear
22 now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God [that] pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, [even] the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt
23 no more drink it again; *thou shalt drink of it no longer:* But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over; *it shall be given to the Chaldeans, who tyrannized over thee, oppressed thy conscience, and to whose insults thou hast too tamely submitted.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are taught how useful it is to look back, and contemplate our original, v. 1. We are born of the dust, (what an humble origin!) are in a feeble, helpless state, descended from degenerate parents, and have many corruptions and sinful propensities. Let us often think of this, that we may be humble, adore the divine goodness in our formation and preservation, and especially his love to such mean and sinful creatures in their redemption; that we may draw encouragement from hence to trust in him to fulfil all his promises, whatever difficulties may be in the way.

2. We see the character and happiness of God's people, v. 7, 8. They know righteousness, have their minds enlightened, understand what is good, and what the will of the Lord is; they have his law in their hearts; take pains to study and remember it, to feel its power, and obey its commands. They may be reproached and reviled, even for their piety and steadfastness; but these reproaches are not to be regarded. God will defend his cause, and those who adhere to it; it shall prosper, and they shall be happy; while scoffers and revilers shall waste away, and be covered with everlasting shame and reproach.

3. We should learn, from former experiences of God's power and goodness, to trust in him for futurity, as they are a great encouragement to our faith. God often reminds his people of this; and particularly in this chapter. It shows the advantage of scripture histories, and the importance of recording past appearances of

Providence for us. It would encourage our prayers in seasons of danger, and tend to silence that fear of man which bringeth a snare, which is often groundless, and always unbecoming. Our remembering the power, faithfulness, and goodness of God, would prevent any inordinate fear of what frail, dying man can do unto us. Let us then think less highly of man, and more highly of God, if we desire to be easy and happy.

4. We see that God easily can, and at length certainly will, change the afflicted condition of his people. He is the Lord, and their covenant God; who will plead their cause, vindicate their character, confound their enemies, and show that his cause was a righteous one. He may put a cup of affliction into their hands, and it becomes them to drink it with all submission; sensible, that though it is not pleasant, it is wholesome, and will be exchanged for a cup of blessings. But those who are enemies to God's ways and people, shall drink the very dregs, and have no alleviation of their misery.

CHAP. LII.

This chapter refers to the happy change made in the state of the Jews by their return from their captivity, as illustrating the more important deliverance by the gospel.

1 AWAKE, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on
thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; *re-*
sume thy former strength and dignity: for henceforth there shall
no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean;
2 *there shall be no more idolatry within thee.* Shake thyself from
the dust, *where thou hast sat as a mourner;* arise, [and] sit down
on thy throne, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy
neck, O captive daughter of Zion; *take all prudent methods to*
3 *recover thy liberty, and gain the favour of thy conquerors.* For
thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; *you*
have parted with your liberty only to enjoy your sins, and have got
nothing by it; and ye shall be redeemed without money; *Cyrus*
4 *shall deliver you freely.* For thus saith the Lord GOD, My peo-
ple went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the
Assyrian oppressed them without cause, *and I delivered them*
5 *from both.* Now therefore what have I here, saith the LORD,
that my people is taken away for nought? *what claim have the*
Chaldeans to keep my people in bondage, whom they have taken
away without cause? they that rule over them make them to
howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day [is]
blasphemed; *they are cruelly used, and God is blasphemed, as if*
6 *he had cast them off, or was unable to help them.* Therefore my
people shall know my name, *my power,* therefore [they shall

know] in that day that I [am] he that doth speak: behold, [it is] I, *who am come to fulfil my promise.*

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; *meaning the messengers that come from Babylon to bring the news of deliverance;* that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! *his providence and care of his church now appear in performing his promises.*

8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing? *the watchmen, seeing the messengers coming at a distance, shall begin a song of joy and praise:* for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion; *they shall see face to face, that is, clearly and evidently see his favour returning, and their glory dawning.*

9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath re-
10 deemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God; *his power and holiness in their deliverance from Babylon, shall be an emblem of, and serve to intro-*
11 *duce the great salvation by Jesus Christ.* Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean [thing;] go ye out of the midst of her; *go out of Babylon, cleanse yourselves from idolatrous defilements and ceremonial pollutions; bring no idolatrous practices out of Babylon, as ye did out of Egypt;* be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD; *ye priests, that bear the holy vessels which Cyrus restored. Ye shall have time to cleanse your-*
12 *selves,* For ye shall not go out with haste, *as ye did out of Egypt, in a diffident, distrustful manner,* nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you: and the God of Israel [will be] your rereward; *he will defend you from enemies before and behind.**

13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, *he shall conduct himself in his office with integrity and wisdom,* he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high; *men and angels shall admire him,*
14 *and God shall exalt him.* As many were astonished at thee;† his visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; *they were astonished to see such an alteration made in his countenance by his sorrows and sufferings, and such a change in his circumstances between the multitude fol-*
15 *lowing him in triumph, and his being crucified.* So shall he sprinkle many nations, *by his blood, his word, and spirit, and the ordinance of baptism;* the kings shall shut their mouths at him; *shall attend to his doctrine in an humble, reverent manner:* for [that] which had not been told them shall they see; and [that] which they had not heard shall they consider; *that is, his heavenly doctrine, such as human reason could not discover. This is applied in Rom.* xv. 21. *to the gospel.*

* Here another section begins, which contains a glorious prophecy of Christ, to the end of the next chapter; this division spoils the beauty and sense of the prophecy.

† Or, *at him,* as the Syrian, Chaldee, and Vulgate versions render it.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see how the glad tidings of salvation should be received. The gospel brings us news of a greater deliverance than that of the Jews from Babylon; a deliverance from the captivity of sin and Satan; a message of peace with God, and the prospect of eternal life. We now see heavenly truths clearly, and enjoy the favour of God. How thankfully then should these glad tidings be received, and how welcome should christian ministers be who publish them! *Rom.* x. 15. *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* They should be *esteemed highly in love for their work's sake*; and we should earnestly pray that they may be spread over the whole world, *that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of the Lord.*

2. We see what is necessary to our being partakers of this salvation. We must rouse and exert ourselves, put on our strength, endeavour to break the chains of sin, and regain our liberty. The same exhortation is addressed to us that was to Israel, 2 *Cor.* vi. 17. *Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord: touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you: have no communion with the unfruitful works of darkness.* Let all God's people, especially his ministers, be holy; then shall we enjoy the divine protection, be cleansed from all our iniquities, and at length see the everlasting salvation of our God.

CHAP. LIII.

This is a remarkable prophecy of Christ, the most illustrious in all the Old Testament; it describes his sufferings as exactly as if it was a history of them.

1 WHO hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm
of the LORD revealed? *The prophet speaking in the name of Christ and his apostles, laments that so few among the Jews believed the report of the gospel, or were influenced by those miracles which were wrought by the arm or power of God; and*
2 *suggests one reason, viz. Christ's mean appearance.* For he shall grow up before him, *under the eye and care of God, and in the sight of all the people,* as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; *as a sucker or tender branch, in a thirsty soil, that is, from the house of David, which was now sunk into obscurity:* he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him; *he hath no extraordinary comeliness, no external pomp, nothing to suit the car-*
3 *nal expectations of the Jews; therefore* He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; *he shall have a variety of sorrows, and the griefs of his intimate*

acquaintance shall be quite familiar to him : and we hid as it were
[our] faces from him ; *or, as in the margin of our bibles, he hid*
as it were his face from us ; he was despised, and we esteemed
him not ; *we treated him with contempt and abhorrence ; we,*
4 *who above all others, should have most esteemed him.* Surely he
hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; *he hath healed*
our diseases by his miracles, and borne the penalty of our sins : yet
we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted ; *we*
thought him justly punished, as a blasphemer, and considered him
5 *as a monument of divine vengeance.* But he [was] wounded for
our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities : the
chastisement of our peace [was] upon him : and with his stripes
we are healed ; *our peace was made with God, and we were heal-*
ed of our spiritual disorders, by his sufferings, whereby he made
6 *an atonement for sin, and obtained the holy spirit for us.* All we
like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his
own way ; *have followed our sensual and sinful inclinations ;* and
the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ; *by the*
7 *appointment of God he suffered to expiate it.* He was oppressed,
and he was afflicted, *by the weight of his sufferings, and his deep*
and tender sense of them ; though it may be rendered, 'it was ex-
acted of him, and he answered the demand ;' yet he opened not his
mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a
sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth
to express any revenge or impatience, to complain of heaven, or
8 *revile his persecutors.* He was taken from prison and from
judgment ; *or, taken away by distress and judgment ; he was dis-*
tressed in judgment, that is, had not a fair trial : and who shall
declare his generation ? *who can describe the wickedness of that*
nation by whom he was crucified ? or, who would ever have thought
he had been the son of David, who was described in scripture by
*such illustrious characters ?** for he was cut off out of the land
of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.
9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his
death ; *he was buried by permission of the Roman governor, near*
the place of execution ; yet with a rich and honourable burial, with
fine linen and spices, and in a rich man's sepulchre, Matt. xxvii. 57.
because, *or, although,* he had done no violence, neither [was any]
10 deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him ;
he hath put [him] to grief ; *it was a wise and gracious appoint-*
ment of God ; and he took pleasure in his sufferings, as making an
atonement for sin : when thou shalt make his soul an offering
for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days ; *he*
shall have many converts, or spiritual children, by whom his name
and religion shall be kept up, and the pleasure of the LORD, *that*
is, the salvation of souls, which is God's pleasure, shall prosper
11 in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, [and] shall
be satisfied ; *he will reflect upon the success of his labours and*

* Bp. Lowth translates the passage thus ; *By an oppressive judgment he was taken off ! and his manner of life who would declare ?*

sufferings with joy: by his knowledge, *or, by the knowledge of him,* shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear
12 their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; *he shall be a successful conqueror, and, like a strong man armed, divide his spoils; or, he shall divide the spoils of the strong, of sin and Satan, and lead captivity captive;* because he hath poured out his soul, *or blood, like a drink offering,* unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; *treated like one of them in his trial and death;* and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors; *he prayed for his murderers, and ever liveth to make intercession for transgressors.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us adore the spirit of prophecy, that so plainly described the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. How absurd is it to apply this to Jeremiah, or any other sufferer but Christ! It is remarkably plain and strong; it has converted many Jews, and some learned Rabbies, when they compared the prophecy and the correspondent events; and also a celebrated infidel of our own country. Let it therefore confirm our faith in the gospel, and our steady adherence to Jesus Christ, the Messiah that should come.

2. Let us admire the love of Christ in bearing all these sufferings for sinful men. In what a variety of awful language are his sufferings described, and how just is the description! How frequently are we informed, that he died for our sins, and not for his own. Who, that carefully reads this chapter, can deny the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice, and proper expiation? Let us therefore cherish a lively gratitude to him, *who suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust.*

3. Let us be careful that we do not reject this Saviour. It was strange that the Jews should do it, when they had this prophecy in their hands, which so plainly foretold his sufferings. But they did it; and their obstinacy and unbelief confirms our faith; for here that also is plainly foretold. We hear the report of the gospel, and have not the same prejudices against it as they had. Let us believe it; and never hide our faces from Christ; but receive him as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and rather suffer any thing, than give up faith in him and a good conscience.

4. Let us rejoice in the extent of the Redeemer's kingdom, and earnestly pray for its increase. This part of the prophecy has likewise been fulfilled: Christ has a numerous seed; his cause has prospered amidst a thousand difficulties; and shall still prosper, for it is God's pleasure. Let us pray that he may yet see of the travail of his soul, and justify multitudes more, even to the ends of the earth, and till the end of time: and may every one of us be the Redeemer's willing captives now, and his eternal glory and joy!

CHAP. LIV.

The prophet, having foretold the sufferings of Christ, proceeds to describe the glory and increase of the church.

1 SING, O barren, thou [that] didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou [that] didst not travail with child: for more [are] the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. *This is applied by Paul to the calling in of the gentiles; they shall be more numerous than ever the Jews were, though before they had not stood in a cove-*
2 *nant relation to God.* Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; *an allusion to God's people as formerly dwelling in tents, which they are called*
3 *upon to enlarge and strengthen for their numerous children;* For thou, *my church,* shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, *far beyond thy present bounds:* and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited; *those who know not God, and are therefore desolate, shall become wise*
4 *and holy.* Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, *thy small beginnings, when in a persecuted state,* and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more; *when thou hadst no covenant rela-*
5 *tion with God.* For thy Maker [is] thine husband; The LORD of hosts [is] his name, *he will manifest his affection to thee, though he might seem to have cast thee off;* and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called; *that is, the God of the whole Gentile church, as well as of the Jews.*
6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God; *as a wife put away from her husband for unfaithfulness, who remembering the tenderness of her youthful days, and seeing*
7 *marks of repentance, receives her again.* For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.
8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith
9 the LORD thy Redeemer.* For this [is as] the waters of Noah unto me: for [as] I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee; *my covenant with Israel is equally firm and sure, and I will bring them at length into a state*
10 *of favour, from which they shall never be excluded.* For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith thy LORD that hath mercy on thee;

* This is applicable to the Jews amidst their dispersion, and seems to refer to their future conversion.

and the covenant of God shall be as firm with all christians as with
11 *the Jews.* O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, [and] not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy
12 foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders, *or walls,*
13 of pleasant stones.* And all thy children [shall be] taught of the LORD; and great [shall be] the peace of thy children; *an explanation of the figurative expressions before used, and which shows that the beauty of the church consists in knowledge, holiness,*
14 *and love.* In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee: *thou shalt be delivered from thine enemies, from being overwhelmed with trouble, and even*
15 *from death.* Behold, they shall surely gather together, [but] not by me: *they shall have no commission from me, as the church's enemies sometimes have:* whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake, *out of the love I have for thee, that is,*
16 *shall come over to thy side.*† Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy;
the metal, the smith, and the instruments made by them, the hands that wield, are all my creatures; I have an absolute command
17 *over them, and they can do no more than I permit.* No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue [that] shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn; *whether they attempt thy destruction by forcible assaults, or injurious calumnies, I will plead thy cause, and undertake to justify thee.* This [is] the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness [is] of me, saith the LORD.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE accession of the gentiles to the church claims our praise. We have reason to bless God for the gospel; that it extends to the gentiles; that it hath spread so wonderfully on the right hand and on the left; that many nations, once ignorant and barbarous, and our own in particular, are brought into covenant with God. Here the name of Christ is known, and pure religion set up. We have reason to sing for joy, that God hath so remarkably favoured us; and should pray that he may soon appear as *the Lord of the whole earth.*

2. God's gracious declarations concerning his church in general, are applicable to every true christian. They are often in an afflicted state; God seems to forsake them; but it is but for a moment;

* These verses represent the church as a company of mariners tossed on the ocean, and afterward conducted to a haven of rest and joy, as much superior to any present scene, as the city here described would be to any thing the eye of man ever saw. This is applicable to the prosperity of the gospel church, which is built on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

† *Doddridge* and *Lowth.*

his wrath is comparatively little, to what they deserve. Observe the beautiful and comfortable opposition: his wrath is little, but his mercy great; desertion is but for a small moment, but his kindness everlasting. His covenant continues firm, and reaches through eternity. How wonderful is the goodness of God to his people! What reason have they to trust him in the darkest scenes, and under every affliction! being sensible, that *these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for them a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.*

3. We see of how much importance it is that we be thankful for, and hearken to, divine teaching. We enjoy the means of instruction; but that is not all. Our Lord remarks, John vi. 45. *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God;* applying this prophecy to the influences of divine grace. We are instructed to know God, are the children of christian parents, who exceed in knowledge the wisest heathen philosophers. But, beside this, we have a divine teaching, by which the mind is enlightened and opened, guided in the intricacies of life, and directed in the way of duty and happiness. No labours of ministers, no pains of our own in reading or hearing, will do without this. Let none despise it; let all value it, and seek it earnestly for themselves and their children, as they desire to obtain great and everlasting peace.

4. God's universal dominion is a great satisfaction and comfort to his people, therefore it should be often reflected upon; especially in times of war and desolation. It is he who gives sagacity to discover mines of coal, to temper metals, to form swords, and other instruments of destruction; *he created the wasters to destroy:* (a fine idea of gentlemen soldiers!) God gives them their strength and resolution, and therefore can easily restrain or confound them. It is pleasant amidst the commotions of the world, to think that all nature is under God's control; that he overrules all; will secure the interest of his church amidst national desolations; and that *no weapon formed against it shall prosper.*

CHAP. LV.

This chapter contains the substance of the covenant of grace; and gives merciful encouragement to sinners to return to God. It begins with a proclamation to this purpose.

1 HO, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price; *water, wine, and milk, are emblems of spiritual blessings; these are offered to those who thirst, that is, who earnestly desire them, without money or price: a sense of their poverty and unworthiness, is all that God demands, though the blessings are infinitely*
2 *above all price.* Wherefore do ye spend money for [that which

is] not bread? and your labour for [that which] satisfieth not? *that is, about the things of this world, in which there is no solid, lasting happiness to be found:* hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye [that which is] good, and let your soul delight itself in
2 fatness, *and ye shall obtain what will satisfy and delight you, the true knowledge of God and eternal happiness.** Incline your
3 ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, *spiritually and happily*, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, [even] the sure mercies of David; *that is, the mercies that were promised to David, which he set such a value upon, and which are given in Christ, the son of David; procured by his death, and*
4 *made sure by his covenant to all that believe.* Behold, I have given him [for] a witness *of God's mercy and faithfulness* to the people, a leader and commander to the people; *a prince and a lawgiver, to whose authority and commands all are to be subject.*
5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation [that] thou knowest not, and nations [that] knew not thee, *that is, the gentile nations*, shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee, *by enabling thee to*
6 *work miracles, raising thee from the dead, and setting thee at his right hand.* Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye
7 upon him while he is near; *before the time come when he will not regard you:* Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; *a little external reformation is not sufficient; let him entirely abandon his wicked ways, and his unrighteous thoughts:* and let him return unto the LORD, *as his supreme ruler and good*, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; *he will multiply pardons, though his sins are ever so many and aggravating.*
8 For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your
9 ways my ways, saith the LORD. For, [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts; *men are not ready to forgive, especially repeated offences; but my ways of faithfulness and mercy are quite above your comprehension, and infinitely be-*
10 *yond what you had any reason to expect.* For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, *for a croft another year*, and bread to
11 the eater, *for a present supply:* So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it; *it shall not be wholly without effect, and*
12 *all its promises shall be amply fulfilled.* For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; *ye shall be brought from a state of ignorance, sin, and misery, and proceed in religion with pleasure:* the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap [their] hands; *a face of de-*

* This verse is an emphatical form of speech; intimating that men take more pains about the world, than heaven would cost them.

light and joy shall spread over the creation, and even insensible
13 *nature seem to rejoice.* Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; *those who before were wild and troublesome shall become good and useful:* and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign [that] shall not be cut off; *all shall redound to the glory of God, and they shall be the eternal monuments of his grace.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us adore God for the riches and freedom of gospel grace. Under the beautiful images of water, wine, and milk, the most valuable blessings are offered; offered upon the most easy terms, and offered to all. There is enough to supply every want, and satisfy every desire. An everlasting covenant is proposed, and sure mercies; blessings quite suited to our needy, helpless state are promised. How admirable is the grace that freely offers them! and what folly is it in men to neglect them! to refuse solid satisfaction and everlasting good, and pursue that which can never satisfy! May we be wise; and *labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life.*

2. Let us consider the Lord Jesus Christ as *a witness, a leader, and a commander.* He came to bear witness to the truth; and it becomes us to receive his doctrine, as worthy of all acceptation. He confirmed it by his miracles and death. Let us then obey his commands, and follow his steps; he will then guide us in the way of peace and happiness, and conduct us to everlasting glory.

3. Let sinners hearken to these gracious calls to repentance, and comply with them. We have here a most instructive view of the nature of repentance; it is *to forsake every evil way, to put away all evil thoughts, and cleanse the heart from wickedness:* It is *to return to the Lord,* as our rightful owner and sovereign good; then *he will forgive us;* we shall find the noblest satisfaction and pleasure in his good ways; and be led to eternal happiness. But let sinners return immediately, and *seek the Lord while he may be found;* for it may soon be too late, and the day of grace and hope may be expired.

4. Let us encourage ourselves in that gracious promise concerning the word of God in *v.* 10, 11. We see the happy effects of snow and rain. We have already seen some of these promises fulfilled, in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, and the spread of his gospel among the gentiles. All God's other promises shall be accomplished, and his word have its intended effect. This is a great encouragement to ministers amidst their many discouragements, that some good shall be produced by their labours, and the word be a savour of life to some souls. If we desire that it should be so to ours, let us see that we value it, diligently attend to it, and receive it into good and honest hearts. And may God multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of righteousness in us all, to his glory and our eternal joy.

CHAP. LVI.

Begins with an exhortation to God's people to prepare for that great deliverance prophesied of in the foregoing chapters.

1 THUS saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation [is] near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed; *observe all my laws and commandments, for that dispensation is near to be introduced, which contains the brightest*
2 *display of my justice, faithfulness, and goodness.* Blessed [is] the man [that] doeth this, and the son of man [that] layeth hold on it, *that acts with steadiness and resolution in religion;* that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil; *that does nothing unlawful on the sabbath day,*
3 *nor neglects any of the proper duties of it.* Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, *that is, any strangers that might choose to go with the Jews from Babylon, and become proselytes to the worship of the true God,* speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I [am] a dry tree; *I have no*
4 *offspring to be admitted into the covenant.* For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose [the things] that please me, and take hold of my covenant; *who accept the offers and comply with the terms of it, and who have truly*
5 *pious dispositions;* Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off; *I will give them spiritual blessings, great honour and comfort there, and a name that shall not be cut off,*
6 *as that of the most numerous families may be.** Also the sons of the stranger, *the heathen,* that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, *to become proselytes,* every one that keepeth the sabbath from
7 polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices [shall be] accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people; *their sacrifices shall be accepted, and they shall enjoy great delight in their approaches to God. The place of worship being called a house of prayer, and not sacrifice, and being said to be for all people, intimates that this refers to the admittance of Gentiles into the gospel church, on the same terms as*
8 *the believing Jews.* The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather [others] to him, beside those that are gathered unto him; *the Gentiles as well as Jews, that is, many more Gentiles shall join with them after the captivity.*

* Some of the captive Jews, who were in these circumstances, had need of this consolation when they came back to their own country; for they were deprived by the law of being priests and magistrates; it must therefore have been great self denial and piety in them to leave the Persian court, in which some of them had been preferred. But the passage may likewise intimate, that there would be none of these restrictions under the gospel.

9 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, [yea,] all ye beasts
10 in the forest.* His watchmen [are] blind: they [are] all ignorant, they [are] all dumb dogs, they cannot bark *to awaken the shepherds, or drive away the wolves; they neither reprove nor forewarn sinners;* sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.
11 Yea, [they are] greedy dogs [which] can never have enough, *insatiable in their covetousness,* and they [are] shepherds [that] cannot understand, *that take no pains to understand:* they all look to their own way, *seek their own interest only,* every one for his gain, from his quarter, *from his employment, department, or*
12 *place of abode.* Come ye, [say they,] I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, [and] much more abundant; *they not only run into excesses themselves, but tempt others to do so; confident of the continuance of their prosperity, and deriding the threatenings of the prophets.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE approach of God's salvation is a strong motive to be holy. The gospel displayed the righteousness of God, or his method of justification, and was the glad tidings of salvation; which the Jews were required to prepare themselves for, by doing justice and judgment. And now that salvation is made known unto us, it is our duty to do this; to be honest and exact in our dealings, and upright in our whole deportment, out of gratitude to God for the salvation preached to us, and as we desire to partake of it; especially as it is introductory to everlasting salvation. Let us therefore *awake out of sleep,* and be active in God's service, since *our salvation is nearer than when we believed.*

2. We see the necessity of a serious and strict regard to the sabbath. Observe what stress is laid upon keeping it. It is indispensably required of all proselytes to the Jewish religion; and of all who are joined to the christian church; otherwise they can expect no comfort in God's service, nor will their prayers and praises be accepted. Let us then never waste any part of that holy time, nor neglect any part of the holy work of the day. But we must *lay hold on this.* It requires great resolution to do it, considering how many bad examples we have about us, and how many, even of those who profess religion, act otherwise. This is the way to have the blessing of God upon our religious exercises, and upon our daily business and comforts.

3. How gracious is God in admitting strangers and Gentiles to the privileges of his people! *To bring those, who were once afar off, nigh,* and take *strangers and foreigners to be fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.* Let us, who are the descend-

* This verse begins a new prophecy, which is continued through some following chapters; describing the sins which introduced their calamities and ended in their captivity. The church is represented as God's flock, and their princes and priests as shepherds, to watch over, feed, and defend it; but, because they neglected this care, the wild beasts are called upon to devour it. Their neglect is described, v. 10, &c.

ants of strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, bless God for our christian privileges, and look upon them as sufficiently equivalent for the want or loss of children, or any earthly good. Let us improve them by a conscientious attendance upon God's house of prayer, and by loving and serving him who hath called us to the fellowship of the gospel: then we shall experience abundant satisfaction and joy in all our approaches to God.

4. How miserable is the state of a people whose shepherds deserve the character which is here given of those of Israel. When princes, magistrates, and ministers, are ignorant, idle, greedy, cowardly, and sottish, they not only do not answer the ends of their office, but are a reproach to it, corrupt others by their ill examples, and encourage wickedness by suffering it to go unpunished and unreproved. Let us earnestly pray, that God would preserve our country and churches from such detestable men; and that he would engage all magistrates to be *a terror to evil doers*, and all ministers *to watch for souls, as they that must give an account.*

CHAP. LVII.

The prophet in this chapter goes on to reprove the Jews for their sins, especially their idolatry; and begins with observing, how unaffected they were under the loss of good men, alluding perhaps to the death of Hezekiah or Josiah.

1 THE righteous perisheth, and no man layeth [it] to heart:
and merciful men [are] taken away, none considering that
the righteous is taken away from the evil [to come,] *and that it*
2 *is a token that judgments are coming upon the land.* He shall
enter into peace, *or, go in peace:* they shall rest in their beds,
[each one] walking [in] his uprightness; *or, they shall rest in*
their beds who have walked in uprightness.
3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the
adulterer and the whore; *ye pretend to be the seed of Abraham,*
4 *but are idolaters, and the children of idolaters.* Against whom
do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth,
[and] draw out the tongue? *ridiculing God's servants, especially*
his prophets; making wry mouths, and hanging out your tongues
to insult them: [are] ye not children of transgression, a seed of
5 falsehood, *or, a false seed?* Inflaming yourselves with idols un-
der every green tree, slaying the children in the vallies under
6 the clifts of the rocks? Among the smooth [stones] of the
stream [is] thy portion; they, they [are] thy lot: even to them
hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat of-
fering; *you have erected pillars to idols, and put them up in groves*
and by rivers, being quite given up to superstition and idolatry.
Should I receive comfort in these? *in such a people, and from*
7 *such services as these?* Upon a lofty and high mountain hast
thou set thy bed; *thou hast built thy temples and altars for idols*

upon high places: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.
8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance, *thy domestic idols:* for thou hast discovered [thyself to another] than me, and art gone up; *that is, leaving me, thou art gone up into an adulterous bed;* thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee [a covenant] with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it; *thou hast multiplied thine idols and altars,*
9 *and taken pattern by the idols of others.* And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase [thyself even] unto hell; *thou hast sent presents to the kings of Assyria and Egypt, in*
10 *the most mean and abject manner.* Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; [yet] saidst thou not, There is no hope; *courting one ally after another, yet wilt not own that it is in vain:* thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved; *thou hast found out a way of preserving thy life for the present, and therefore hast rested in that, without considering that*
11 *it will be upon the whole ruinous to thee.* And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid [it] to thy heart? *why hast thou been afraid of injury from idols and idolatrous kings, and proved false to me?* have not I held my peace even of old, *forbearing to punish, and treating thee with the utmost tenderness,* and thou fearest me not?
12 *but hast shamefully abused my patience and goodness.* I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; *make it evidently appear, by my righteous judgments upon thee, that they are very different from thy own conceit of them:* for they shall not profit thee, *but*
13 *prove thy ruin.* When thou criest, let thy companies, *thy idols or allies,* deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take [them:] but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; *he*
14 *shall continue in the land, or return from captivity;* And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people; *all impediments shall be removed, and a way be made for their safe and honourable re-*
15 *turn.* For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name [is] Holy; I dwell in the high and holy [place,] with him also [that is] of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones; *to afford them support and comfort in all their dif-*
16 *ficulties and afflictions.* For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls [which] I have made, *lest they should grow impatient, and their affliction should become insupportable, and I should only*
17 *destroy my creatures.* For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went
18 on frowardly in the way of his heart.* I have seen his ways,

* Covetousness was a prevailing sin in Israel, therefore they were afflicted, but grew worse rather than better by the correction. Yet God would have compassion upon them, out of regard to the few good men that were among them.

and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners; *that is, to those who mourn for sin and the desolations of their land, which were the effects of it.*
19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to [him that is] far off, and [to him that is] near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him; *I will give occasion for joy and praise to the pious Jews in*
20 *every place, and heal all their grievances.* But the wicked [are] like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; *their guilty conscience shall be a constant source of uneasiness, like the troubled sea, which can never rest, and which, though it may sometimes appear clear on the surface, hath a thick sediment at the bottom, which is worked up when storms and tem-*
21 *pests arise, and is all filth and confusion.* [There is] no peace, saith my God, to the wicked; *whatever external prosperity they enjoy, and though they may partake ever so largely of the temporal blessings of my people.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is displeasing to God when the death of his servants is not laid to heart. They must die as well as others; sometimes he takes away many of them nearly together; and it is a bad omen to the public, a sign of God's displeasure, and that judgments are coming. The loss is very great to the public, as well as to their families. Not to lament it, and take warning by it, shows that men are insensible of the importance of religion, and unconcerned about it; that they are destitute of zeal for the glory of God, and the interest of the church. When God is exercising us with such scenes, let us be humble under his mighty hand; lament the public loss; be more zealous to make it up; and earnestly pray, *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth.*

2. When sinners contemn God, when they despise his laws, affront his messengers, or neglect his institutions, they forget what a great and awful Being he is; that he is possessed of almighty power and inflexible justice; they *think him altogether such a one as themselves.* But they will find, that the Lord, whom they provoke to anger, is stronger than they; and that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

3. There is great reason to lament the obstinacy of sinners in an evil way. The conduct of these idolaters is very like the conduct of wicked men in general. They follow after happiness in this or the other creature enjoyment; are *wearied in the greatness of their way;* are always disappointed, yet will not give out, they will try some other. They take unwearied pains to gratify their lusts; and, because it gives them some present pleasure, they never think of the consequence, and that in the mean time they are dishonouring their rational natures, and debasing themselves even to hell. They had rather displease God than man, and be exposed to his vengeance, than receive and improve his mercies. But when trouble and death

come upon them, it will be in vain to cry to their companions, all will end in disappointment, anguish, and despair.

4. Let us adore the condescension of God, in his regard to humble and contrite souls. What a noble description is here of God! as the eternal Being, *who only hath immortality;* who is infinitely holy, and exalted above all creatures, and dwells in the glorious heavens. Yet he respects and loves the lowly; visits them with his comforts and his favour; condescends to their weaknesses, mitigates their afflictions, and gives support under them. *He will not contend for ever,* for *he knoweth their frame, he remembereth that they are but dust.* Let us then cherish that humble and contrite spirit, which God will not despise.

5. The state of the wicked is a very deplorable one, and what we should all most carefully avoid. The wicked Jews, whether in Babylon or Jerusalem, are assured that they should have no comfort; and the case is the same now with all the wicked. There is a principle of uneasiness and misery within; a guilty conscience, turbulent passions, and fears of future wrath. They are often full of terror amidst their greatest mirth and gaiety; and especially in times of affliction, and in the near views of death. May we then be solicitous to be in a state of peace with God and our own consciences. To repent, and return to him, is the way to obtain it. Let us *mark the perfect man, and behold the upright;* his conscience is easy, his hopes are lively, and his end will be peace.

CHAP. LVIII.

This elegant chapter contains a severe reproof of the Jews on account of their vices, and particularly of their hypocrisy in their fasts and ceremonial observances. It clearly points out their duty, and gives large promises of happiness and prosperity.

1 CRY aloud, *O my prophet,* spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins, *especially in their religious wor-*
2 *ship.* Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; *are desirous of knowing their duty;* they take delight in approaching to God; *in coming to my temple and presenting their sacri-*
3 *fices.* Wherefore have we fasted, *and performed all other parts of external worship,* [say they,] and thou seest not? [wherefore] have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, *the reason is,* in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labour; *you find wherewith to please your-*
4 *selves, and yet are rigorous in burdening others.* Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness, *that is, with a wicked fist, handling the poor with severity:* ye

shall not fast as [ye do this] day, *if ye would have God hear your prayers, and answer them from heaven,* to make your voice to be heard on high, *either in clamorous devotions, or in quarrels*
5 *one with another.* Is it such a fast that I have chosen? *that I will approve and accept of?* a day for a man to afflict his soul, *to mortify himself by external abstinence,* [is it] to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes [under him?] wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the
6 LORD? *canst thou believe it, will be so?* [Is] not this the fast * that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? *that is, cancel those obligations which have been extorted in an unjust manner, and loosen those in some measure, where the rigour of justice would be destructive to the debtor:*
7 [Is it] not to deal thy bread to the hungry, *to send food to the poor and indigent,* and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, *or afflicted,* to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh,
8 *thy own kindred and countrymen?* Then shall thy light, *or happiness,* break forth as the morning, *dart itself out as the sun through the clouds,* and thine health shall spring forth speedily; *all thy wounds shall be quickly healed:* and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward; *his providence shall secure thee from enemies before and*
9 *behind.* Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I [am,] *ready to help thee.* If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, *all instruments of oppression,* the putting forth of the finger *in contempt,* and
10 speaking vanity, *or falsehood;* And [if] thou draw out thy soul, *thy affections and compassion, so that thy heart go along with thy gift,* to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness [be] as the noon day:
11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; *fill thee with plenty, when others are in want:* and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not; *which pours out*
12 *its streams to all that want and come to receive them.* And [they that shall be] of thee, *thy remnant or posterity,* shall build the old waste places; *the temple and city, that the enemies had destroyed:* thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in; *thou shalt build new towns, enlarge old ones; those parts of the country that are desolate, and the paths overgrown, shall be restored, and fortified places built up*
13 *and repaired.* If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,* *and* [from] doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own

* This expression is taken from trampling under foot that which we disregard.

pleasure, *or, making it a day of diversion*, nor speaking [thine own] words, *but the whole of thy discourse be suitable to the holi-*
14 *ness of the day:* Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD, *have true delight in the sabbath;* and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, *thou shalt make foreign conquests,** and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoke [it.]

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is the duty of ministers to represent to their people their sin and danger. This is always proper to be done, for, without it, communities will probably be injured, and souls will certainly be lost: but it is especially so in times of public danger. Then God has particularly commanded it; and they may hope to be heard with particular attention. They are neither to spare themselves nor their people; but to show them their transgression and sin with great plainness, that all may understand it; with great seriousness and earnestness, and with tender compassion, as proceeding from real love to their souls. May all ministers have wisdom and courage to do so; and all their people lend an obedient and attentive ear.

2. We here see how far hypocrites may go in external services. They may seek God daily, express some delight and satisfaction in attending his service; they may ask the way of duty, and take a pride in bringing their sacrifices to his temple; yet indulge themselves in sensual pleasures, lay heavy burdens upon others, have strife and deceit among themselves, and *smite with the fist of wickedness.* All their pompous services are nothing but outward show, *to make their voice to be heard on high*, and can never be pleasing to that God who searches the heart, and requires truth in the inward parts. To all such God will say, *Bring no more vain oblations; your offerings and sacrifices are an abomination to me.* It is not ceremonial observances, nor hanging the head like a bulrush, nor walking in sackcloth and ashes, but justice and charity that make our services acceptable to God; to *remove heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, deal bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and afflicted.* Then shall we be happy in ourselves, acceptable to God, and *he will surround us with his favour as with a shield:* then shall our prayers be heard; and when we call God shall answer, *Here am I; a present help in every time of need.* Reformation and goodness is the way to comfort and happiness.

3. See the honour and happiness of God's faithful servants. Their souls are drawn out to God in devotion and love, and drawn out to the poor in compassion and tender affection; and therefore God will pour down his choicest blessings upon them. Light shall

* This may signify, Thou shalt see thy country delivered from thy enemies, and thou shalt go forth on horses or chariots to see the fortifications once possessed by them.

rise upon them in darkness; God will guide them continually, satisfy their souls, while others are in want, make them as a watered garden, flourishing and fruitful. They and their families shall be blessed through many generations, and repair the breaches that sin and death have been making in the church and world. Happy they who are in such a case! yea, thrice happy they *whose God is the Lord.*

4. We have here another powerful motive to regard the sabbath. If we *remember the sabbath day to keep it holy*, lay aside our business and pleasure, *call it a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and honour him, not finding our own pleasures, nor speaking our own words*; then it is promised, *thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord*; enjoy the highest pleasures in communion with him and a sense of his favour. God will bring such to his holy mountain, *make them joyful in his house of prayer*, and *their sacrifices shall be accepted upon his altar.* Let this engage us to a strict observance of the sabbath, as one of the best preservatives of the power of religion in the soul, and as the most likely means to secure the divine blessing on ourselves, our families, and all our comforts. Hypocrites may keep solemn days of fasting; but none but sincere and pious souls will constantly *keep the sabbath from polluting it.*

CHAP. LIX.

The Israelites having questioned God's power and goodness, because he had not regarded their fastings and prayers, the prophet proceeds further to show them the cause of it.

1 BEHOLD, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, *his power is not weakened*; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear *your prayers, those in particular which you offer on your fast days: it is not from any inability or disinclina-*
2 *tion on his part, that you are not delivered*; But *the true reason of your present calamities is, that* your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face, *that is, his favourable regard*, from you, that he will not hear.
3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness; *you are guilty of murder, theft, and slander.*
4 None calleth for justice, nor [any] pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity; *there is none to espouse the cause of justice and*
5 *truth.* They hatch cockatrice eggs, *or, the eggs of the basilisk*, and weave the spider's web, *(which is unprofitable) in order to deceive and entangle others*: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, *he that hath any dealing with them is sure to suffer by it*, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper; *instead of a fine*
6 *fowl there comes out a serpent which he dares not touch.* Their

webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works [are] works of iniquity, and the act of violence [is in] their hands; *their designs shall*
7 *not come to perfection, nor do them any good.* Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts [are] thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction [are] in their paths; *they are eager and intent upon all their schemes of*
8 *violence and mischief.* The way of peace they know not, *have not regarded,* and [there is] no judgment, *no respect to justice or right,* in their goings: they have made them crooked paths:
9 whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us; neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, [but] we walk in darkness; *we suffer oppression from our enemies abroad, and from tyranny at home, and all our expectations are disappoint-*
10 *ed.* We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope, *or wander,* as if [we had] no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; [we are] in desolate places as dead [men;] *all our schemes are confounded, our councils infatuated, and we are quite*
11 *sunk into despair.* We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves; *the sorrow of some is noisy, and of others silent, or secret:* we look for judgment, but [there is] none; for salvation, [but]
12 it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions [are] with us; and [as for] our iniquities, we know them; *our*
13 *own consciences give full evidence against us:* In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood; *we have been guilty of false judg-*
14 *ment and oppression against men, and of revolting from God.* And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; *as if afraid to enter among such a wicked crew, where she has met with such opposition:* for truth is fallen in the street, *and there is none to raise her up,* and equity cannot enter *into any of our*
15 *courts or public places.* Yea, truth faileth *in our common conversation;* and he [that] departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw [it,] and it displeased him that [there was] no judgment *among his own people.*

16 And he saw that [there was] no man, and wondered that [there was] no intercessor; *that there was none to attempt a reformation or even to intercede for the land:* therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, *to Israel;* and his righteousness, it sustained him; *his faithfulness carried him through all opposition; that is, God determined to show that it was his own goodness in regard to his honour and faithfulness, that led him to inter-*
17 *pose.* For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; *he appeared as a warrior, completely armed, against the Chaldeans and other enemies of his people;* and he put on the garments of vengeance *to their enemies* [for] clothing, and was clad with zeal *for his people* as a

18 cloak. According to [their] deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense; *he will bring judgments on the*
19 *country that oppressed and injured his people.** So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; *many shall be brought to the knowledge and fear of God.* When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him; *if new enemies should come, like an inundation which threatens to bear down all before it, God by some secret powerful method will overcome them.*

But this is only an earnest of what God would do for the Jews hereafter; a promise is added of their conversion to christianity in
20 *the latter day, for so St. Paul expounds it, Rom.* ii. 26. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD; *Christ shall come for the relief, deliverance, and salvation of all that will believe in and obey*
21 *him.* As for me, this [is] my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that [is] upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever; *Christ shall not only have a transient triumph, or work out a temporal deliverance, but establish the Jews in God's covenant again, in which they shall continue to the end of the world; teaching them by his word and spirit, and rendering them effectual on multitudes from one generation to another, even to the end of time: the Jews, when nationally converted, shall never revolt from God any more.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the source of national calamities, and what stops the current of divine favours; and that is, iniquity. God is still powerful, wise, and good; able to restore our peace, to help us against our enemies, and to answer our prayers to their fullest extent. But sin separates between him and us; hinders our prayers from being acceptable to him, and intercepts his mercies when coming to us. We see how displeasing national degeneracy, and the want of piety, justice, and charity, are to him. That it is not only murder, theft, oppression, and false witness, that displease him; but also lying, slander, muttering perverseness, and walking in any of the crooked ways of sin. God sees all this, and it displeases him. This occasions disappointment, confusion, and mourning. It is in vain to pray, unless we do our part to reform. Let every one of us in his private character, and as members of society, remember, that *if we regard iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us.*

* Bp. Lowth translates the verse thus; *He is mighty to recompense; he that is mighty to recompense will requite wrath to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies, to the distant coasts a recompense will he requite.*

2. Those who frame wicked designs, are not likely to find satisfaction in them. Here is a beautiful description of the folly of sinners. They *weave spiders' webs, and hatch vipers' eggs*; their schemes are disappointed, their wickedness discovered, their fraud revealed, their character and honour lost. Or, if they succeed, their spiders' webs will not cover them; there is no solid satisfaction to be had in them; their ways are not ways of peace. Happy are they who are not walking in sinful ways, and have no connection or acquaintance with those that are!

3. Let us rejoice in the mighty power of God, which is able to overcome all opposition. If he puts on his armour, no enemy can stand before him. When the state of our country is so degenerate and melancholy, and our prospects dark, let us still hope in him. When enemies come in like a flood, he can raise up a standard against them, and bring them down at once. Be it a torrent of error, or vice, or misery, he can restrain it. Let the thought encourage us in our spiritual warfare; and let us go forth in an humble dependence on the spirit of the Lord.

4. Amidst all our national alarms and fears, let us still rejoice in the security of the church. Whatever becomes of us and our country, that shall continue; and this is a great comfort to a pious mind. There is a day coming when the poor dispersed, despised, and persecuted Jews shall be converted and restored, and the word and spirit of God shall be given to them, and continue with them for ever. Let us rejoice that we have this word and spirit, and be careful to improve the assistance of both. Let us pray and hope that they may be continued to our seed, and to our seed's seed. But we should remember, that if we desire Christ should be our Redeemer, we must turn from transgression; for *he was sent to bless us by turning us from our iniquities*; without that, we shall perish in them.

CHAP. LX.

This chapter is a prophecy of the glorious state of the gospel church, especially in the latter day, when Jews and Gentiles shall be converted.

1 ARISE, *from obscurity*, shine; for thy light is come, and
the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee; *shine forth thy-*
2 *self, and enlighten others.* For, behold, the darkness shall cover
the earth, and gross darkness the people; *the Gentiles shall be*
grossly ignorant, and the Jews blinded by the strongest prejudices:
but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen
3 upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings
to the brightness of thy rising; *the conversion of the Jews shall*
4 *be a means of spreading christianity among the Gentiles.* Lift up
thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves

together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at [thy] side; *there shall be numerous converts added to the christian church.* Then thou shalt
5 see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; *thou shalt feel a tumult of conflicting passions;** because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, *thy converts shall come from beyond the sea,* the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee, *their zeal shall be employed to promote the cause*
6 *of Christ,*† The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD; *the gentiles becoming members of the church, shall consecrate themselves and all they have to the service of Christ and his church, and supply thee according to their several abilities.*
7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, *the tribute of praise shall be acceptable to me,* and I will glorify the house of my glory, *make*
8 *my church glorious by this access of the gentiles to it.* Who [are] these [that] fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows,
9 *who come in crouds with great eagerness and speed?* Surely the isles shall wait for me, *be ready to receive the gospel,* and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.
10 And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; *the kings of the heathens shall become christians, and bring their wealth to the church:* for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.
11 Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night: that [men] may bring unto thee the forces of the gentiles, and [that] their kings [may be] brought; *intimating the peace and security of the church, and the vast ac-*
12 *cession of converts to it.* For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea [those] nations shall be utterly
13 wasted. The glory of Lebanon, *famous for its cedars,* shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious; *figurative expressions, intimating that the church shall be adorned and perfected by the gifts and graces of its members, their different talents and abilities; yet, in all its splen-*
14 *dor, it will be but God's footstool.* The sons also of them that afflicted thee, shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; *the sons of persecutors shall become proselytes;* and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

* Bp Lowth translates it, *Then shalt thou fear, and overflow with joy, and thy heart shall be ruffled and dilated.*

† These figures are taken from the Jewish worship, and from multitudes coming to bring their sacrifices and their wealth to Jerusalem, by sea and land.

15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man
went through [thee,] I will make thee an eternal excellency, a
joy of many generations; *the Jews shall have some peculiar*
honour showed them by those who had persecuted or despised them.
16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck
the breast of kings; and thou shalt know that I the LORD
[am] thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob;
I will put into the hearts of princes such a care for my church, that
they shall contribute to its welfare as readily and as tenderly as a
mother suckles her child; that is, not from political designs, but
17 *from a cordial affection.* For brass I will bring gold, and for
iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; *it*
shall be superior even to Solomon's temple: I will also make thy
officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness, *that is, rulers*
and governors shall be peaceable and mild, just and righteous; or,
the equity and love with which all the affairs of the church are car-
18 *ried on, shall influence their conduct in civil relations.* Violence
shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction
within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and
thy gates Praise; *no enemy shall waste you, there shall be no civil*
dissensions; but thou shalt see thyself surrounded with salvation,
as with walls, and give thy gates such names in memory of mercies
19 *received, as shall remind thee of praising God for them.* The sun
shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall
the moon give light unto thee; *the light of the sun and moon*
shall be nothing, compared with the light of God's counte-
nance, and the joy of his salvation: but the LORD shall be unto
thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory; *thy character*
and graces shall shine, and bear a resemblance of his lustre; or,
thy relation to him, and interest in him, will be thy greatest honour.
20 Thy sun, *that is, the presence of God with thee,* shall no more go
down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD
shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning
21 shall be ended.* Thy people also [shall be] all righteous: they
shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the
work of my hands, that I may be glorified; *they shall be a more*
pure and holy society than ever before, and shall ascribe all to God;
22 *and he shall be glorified in them.* A little one shall become a
thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will
hasten it in his time; *let not my people be discouraged, because*
they are weak and feeble; the Lord will support and spread his
gospel, till all these great things are accomplished.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE general lesson here taught, is to adore God for his gospel, and to encourage our hopes and prayers for its support and spread. Particularly let us thank him that it has been estab-

* Some understand this of the heavenly world, to which these phrases are applied in the book of Revelations.

lished in the earth; that so many kings are become christians; that this land, once covered with gross darkness, is made light. Still it shall spread, and have a more glorious triumph, as all those figures, taken from earthly glory and Jewish worship, show. Let us long for that day; and in the mean time shine ourselves in all christian graces; and thus *show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

2. When men become sincere christians, they will readily consecrate their substance to the Lord. It is intimated in several parts of this chapter, that kings and great men, upon embracing the gospel, shall give their wealth to the church, that is, devote it to acts of piety and charity. True religion enlarges the heart, subdues a narrow, selfish spirit; and where men find themselves backward to acts of charity, especially to the souls of men and the support of the gospel, they have great reason to fear that they are yet *strangers to the grace of God.*

3. Those who have a sense of the favour of God, and enjoy the tokens of his presence, will be but little concerned about worldly things. They can be content and thankful without many of those things in which the men of this world place their happiness. The light of the sun and moon are as nothing to them, compared with the presence and love of God; they can walk in his light, and be happy in his love, when all is dark and gloomy around them: and will be completely happy when the sun and moon are no more.

4. God will do every thing great and good for his people in the most convenient season. They are apt to be discouraged, to doubt, and fear; but whatever difficulties are in the way of the church's continuance, increase and prosperity, and the happiness of particular souls, God the Lord will effect it; he will do it in his time, which is always the best. Therefore let us trust in him; *though the salvation tarry, wait for it,* for *at length it will come, and will not tarry. The Lord is a God of judgment; and blessed are all they that wait for him.*

CHAP. LXI, LXII.

The best interpreter of scripture, that is, Christ, applies the former part of this chapter to himself, Luke xiv. 18, 21, *saying,* '*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*'

1 THE Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me, *hath set me apart to the office, by the communications of his spirit, (as kings and priests are by being anointed)* to preach good tidings unto the meek, *to the poor in spirit;* he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, *those who are wounded under a sense of guilt,* to proclaim liberty to the captives *of sin, satan, and death,* and the opening of the prison,

2 *or, perfect liberty,* to [them that are] bound ; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD ; *the year of jubilee, which was the Lord's appointment, and very acceptable to the poor, as debts were then cancelled, slaves released, and mortgaged estates restored ; (Lev.* XXV. 9.) and the day of vengeance of our God, *of his righteous judgments on the enemies of his gospel ;* to comfort all
3 that mourn ; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion *joy and gladness,* to give unto them beauty, *or, a beautiful crown,* for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ;* that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified : *the end of all is to promote their righteousness and God's glory. The next verses refer to the return of the Jews to their own land in the latter day, and their prosperity in it.*

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the
5 desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien [shall be] your ploughmen and your vine dressers ; *the gentiles shall love and*
6 *be ready to serve you :* But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD : [men] shall call you the Ministers of our God ; *ye shall become a kingdom of priests, as formerly, and be holy unto the Lord :* ye shall eat the riches of the gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves ; *ye shall partake of their plenty, and*
7 *become instruments of their conversion.* For your shame [ye shall have] double, *instead of shame ye shall have double glory ;* and [for] confusion they shall rejoice in their portion : therefore in their land they shall possess the double : everlasting joy shall be unto them ; *as the land will long have lain barren, he will repay them by extraordinary fruitfulness, and uninterrupted*
8 *peace and prosperity.* For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering ; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them ; *the reason why I rejected them was their wickedness, which was as hateful to me, as if a man should steal a beast, and then come and offer it ; but now they shall serve me in spirit and truth, and be*
9 *restored to my covenant.* And their seed shall be known among the gentiles, and their offspring among the people ; *they and their descendants shall become illustrious and remarkable, and be known as God's ancient people, to whom the promises originally belonged :* all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they [are] the seed [which] the LORD hath blessed ; *such piety shall appear in them, that all shall say they are worthy favourites of the Lord. The church is then represented as breaking out into a song*
10 *of praise.* I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, *with*

* Here is a reference to the manner of mourning among the Jews ; they put on sackcloth, or coarse garments, and spread dust or ashes on their heads, instead of oil, (see 2 *Sam.* xiv. 2.) On the contrary, splendid clothing and ointment poured on the head were signs of joy.

salvation, as a garment, and righteousness, as a robe; as a bride-
groom decketh [himself] with ornaments, and as a bride adorn-
11 eth [herself] with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth
her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it
to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and
praise to spring forth before all the nations; *as seeds and plants
in a garden seem to lie dead in winter, but in the spring revive
and grow, so God will make his gospel spread, and the Jewish
church remarkable through the world.*

CHAP. LXII. *Encouraged by the promises in the foregoing
chapter, the prophet, in the name of all God's people, declares,*
1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's
sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as
brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp [that] burneth;
until its deliverance and righteousness become illustrious in the
2 *eyes of all the world.* And *God answers*, the gentiles shall see
thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be
called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall
name; *some say, the christian name; but it rather refers to a*
3 *new and better state.* Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the
hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God;
thou shalt be precious and honourable to him, and his perfections
4 *shall be displayed and glorified in thee.* Thou shalt no more be
termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed
Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, *the object of my
delight*, and thy land Beulah, *the wedded matron:* for the LORD
5 delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.* For [as] a
young man marrieth a virgin, [so] shall thy sons marry thee:
and [as] the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, [so] shall thy
God rejoice over thee; *thou shalt live in harmony and love, and
be no more separated.*†

6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, [which]
shall never hold their peace day nor night; *ministers shall take
pains to promote in their people a devout spirit:* ye that make
mention of the LORD, *or, ye that are the Lord's remembrancers,*
7 keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till
he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.‡

8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of
his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn [to be] meat
for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink
9 thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: But they that have
gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have
brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.‖

* The Jewish church is here represented as married to the Lord, and, for its unbelief, divorced; but hereafter it shall be taken into favour again, and shall be as much delighted with returning to its own country and living in it, as a bridegroom is with his bride.

† It was customary in the east for youths that were never married always to marry virgins, and widowers, however young, to marry widows. See *Harmer's Observations*, in loc.

‡ The prophet here speaks of God after the manner of men, as overcome by importunity.

‖ This must refer to something future; for it is not applicable to the state of the Jews in any past period. There is probably a reference to *Deut.* xii.

The prophet, firmly believing their general restoration, speaks of
10 *it as now doing:* Go through, go through the gates; prepare
ye the way of the people, cast up, cast up the highway; gather
out the stones; *remove all obstacles, give them all assistance;* lift
up a standard for the people, *to call them together amidst their dis-*
11 *persion.* Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the
world, Say ye to the daughters of Zion, Behold, thy salvation
cometh; behold, his reward [is] with him, and his work before
him; *embrace the Messiah, in whose service you shall find great*
12 *advantage.* And they shall call them, The holy people, The
redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out,
A city not forsaken; *a people taken into covenant again, and never*
more to be cast out.

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW welcome to our souls should Christ be, who came on so gracious an errand. How wretched was the state of mankind before he came! Slaves of sin, captives of Satan, prisoners of death. But he proclaims liberty, communicates peace and comfort, and leads to everlasting joy. How venerable is the character of Christ, so richly anointed with the Spirit for this purpose! and how well has he executed his office! Let us rejoice that he hath done it; welcome him into our hearts, and seek comfort and salvation through him. Remember that the great end of his mission and ministration, and all the comforts which he bestows on his people, is, that they may be righteous; trees of righteousness, bringing forth the fruit of it abundantly, ornaments to the church, and serviceable to all about them.

2. How profane and impious is it to devote to works of charity and piety what is dishonestly procured, *v.* 8. Too much of this has been practised among christians. Many hospitals have been built and endowed, with the fruits of rapine and the spoils of the poor. God loves judgment in governors; and between man and man, in their commerce, dealings, and conversation; but he hates injustice and oppression; and those who think to atone for their dishonesty by such acts of charity, will find themselves miserably deceived, for *the unrighteous shall not enter the kingdom of God.*

3. How much is it the duty of all God's people to be constant and earnest intercessors with him for the prosperity of the church, and the advancement of religion! In how lively and encouraging a manner is this duty urged upon us! We are not to hold our peace, not to rest, not to keep silence, nor give God rest; all which implies great fervency and perseverance in prayer. It is not enough that the watchmen pray; but all God's people, all who make mention of his name, must also pray; otherwise they are not his people, for they want love both to God and man. He allows and encourages us to be importunate with him. It is very desirable that there were more of this devout, fervent spirit among us. The decay of

it is one of the clearest proofs of national degeneracy, and one of the strongest symptoms of national ruin. Whatever others do therefore, let us *continue in prayer, and watch thereunto with all perseverance.*

CHAP. LXIII.

The prophet having described the prosperity of the Jews in the latter day, proceeds to describe the day of vengeance on their enemies, which he had just mentioned. (See ch. lxi. 2.) They are called Edomites, because these were the ancient enemies of God's people; and the beginning of the chapter is parallel to several passages in the Revelations which refer to this event. There, as in Ezekiel, their enemies are called Gog and Magog; these shall attack them after their settlement, but be destroyed by the immediate hand of heaven. The prophet uses a dramatic form, or dialogue.

1 WHO [is] this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah,* this [that is] glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, *with an air of majesty, and not like one fatigued or wounded? The heroic warrior is represented as answering,* I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save; *I, the Messiah, who am faithful to all my promises.* 2 Wherefore [art thou] red in thine apparel, *sprinkled with blood,* and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat? 3 *The Messiah answers,* I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people [there was] none with me:† for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, *as easily and effectually as grapes are crushed in a wine press;* and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my 4 raiment. For the day of vengeance [is] in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed, *the time when they shall be redeemed,* is 5 come. And I looked, and [there was] none to help; and I wondered that [there was] none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld 6 me; *that is, my zeal and concern for my people.* And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. *The church then breaks out into grateful acknowledgments of former favours, as an encouragement to hope for what it promised.*

7 I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, [and] the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and 8 according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. For he

* A chief city; though, as Edom signifies red, and Bozrah vintage, these may be general expressions for conquered enemies.

† The whole of this verse intimates, that the final ruin of the enemies of the converted Jews shall not be owing to human means or power, but to the immediate hand of God.

said, Surely they [are] my people, children [that] will not lie; *they are the children of my servants in covenant with me, and will not be false and treacherous:* so he was their Saviour; *he acted as*
9 *if they had been faithful.* In all their affliction he was afflicted, *he was tenderly affected, and sympathized with them,* and the angel of his presence, *that is, Christ, whom they tempted in the wilderness,* saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;*
10 and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, *which directed Moses and the elders of Israel;* therefore he was turned to be their enemy,
11 [and] he fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, [and] his people, [saying,] Where [is] he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd, *or shepherds,* of his flock, *that is, Moses and Aaron?* where [is] he that put
12 his holy Spirit within him?† That led [them] by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them,
13 to make himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, [that] they should not stumble? *as a horse runs safely and swiftly in a plain open*
14 *country:* As a beast goeth down into the valley *to feed where he finds abundance,* the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people *into Canaan,* to make thyself a glorious name. *Then follows a prayer suited to the present case of the Jews, in their dispersion, which is continued to the end of the next chapter.*
15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where [is] thy zeal, *thy great compassion,* and thy strength, the sounding, *or multitude,* of thy bowels, and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?
16 *are they quite gone?* Doubtless thou [art] our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; *though they are dead and gone, and can afford us no relief, or, if they could, would not, because we have been so wicked; yet* thou, O LORD, [art] our father, our redeemer; thy name [is] from
17 everlasting; *O deliver us for the sake of thy name.* O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? [and] hardened our heart from thy fear? *why hast thou suffered us to do it, and done those things in the course of thy providence, from which thou knewest our perverse heart would take occasion to depart from thee?* Return *to us in mercy,* for thy servants' sake, the
18 tribes of thine inheritance. The people of thy holiness have possessed [it] but a little while: our adversaries have trodden
19 down thy sanctuary.‡ We are [thine:] thou never bearest rule over them; they were not called by thy name; *we are*

* Bp. Lowth translates the passage thus: *It was not an envoy nor an angel of his presence that saved them; through his love and his indulgence he himself redeemed them.*

† By an elegant figure God is represented as recollecting their former importance, as an argument to show them favour, though undeserving.

‡ This Isaiah foresaw, and therefore prepared this prayer for the people; and this is the case with the holy land: it was destroyed by the Romans, is possessed by the Turks, and thus trodden under foot of the Gentiles.

thy covenant people, and they are not; or rather, we have long been as those over whom thou didst not rule, who have not been called by thy name: which sense agrees well with the present condition of the Jews.

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW glorious is the character of Christ, as here described. What a great and majestic Saviour! *He speaks in righteousness;* his commands are all righteous, and he is faithful to his promises. *He is able to save* his people in the greatest extremity, and to overcome their most numerous and mighty enemies. How safely then may we trust in him! How secure are the interests of the church, and those of every particular believer, in such mighty and gracious hands!

2. Let us learn carefully to remember, and seriously to *mention, the loving kindness of the Lord.* What a variety of strong expressions does the prophet, in the name of the church, use to describe it! Let it teach us to remember his goodness to us, to our families, to our country, and to the church of God. This will show us the baseness and guilt of our own ingratitude and rebellion, and thus lead us to repentance; and it will encourage our hope in him, notwithstanding our guilt and unworthiness.

3. From the covenant relation between God and his people, he may reasonably expect faithfulness from them, and they salvation from him. His people are *children that will not lie;* their character is, that they do not dissemble in their covenant transactions, but are sincere and honest; they mean what they say, and perform what they promise. If they do not this, whatever they may think of themselves, they are not God's children; but *children of the devil, who was a liar from the beginning.* If we are faithful, he will be our Saviour; will deliver us from sin and hell, and conduct us to immortal glory. But if we *rebel,* and *vex his holy Spirit,* that strives with us, *he will turn to be our enemy,* and *will fight against us*; we shall lose our best friend, and fall into the hands of the most formidable enemy.

4. We may from this chapter draw many noble arguments and encouragements in prayer, especially in time of trouble. We may observe God's tender regard to his people: *he is afflicted in their affliction;* like a tender parent sympathizing with a sick child; his bowels yearn over his suffering servants. He is so good that he makes his former mercies an argument to bestow further favours; which men would rather consider as an argument against doing it. Let us think of our covenant relation to him; and plead these things in prayer: let fatherless children especially, remember, that though their parents *are ignorant of them, and acknowledge them not, yet God is their father, and his name is everlasting.* Let them seriously address him under that title; and *in him the fatherless will find mercy.*

CHAP. LXIV.

This is a continuation of the prayer begun in the former chapter. It describes the case, and is intended for the use of the Jews in their present dispersed state, and not their captivity in Babylon, as some understand it.

1 OH that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst
come down, that the mountains might flow down at
thy presence! *Oh that God would look upon us, and shew himself*
as visibly in our favour as he did to our fathers at mount Sinai,
when there was such thunder, lightning, and rain, as made the
2 *mountains look as if they were melted down;* As [when] the
melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, *or when*
the fire make the metals melt, and the waters boil, to make thy
name known to thine adversaries, [that] the nations may trem-
3 ble at thy presence. When thou didst terrible things [which]
we looked not for, *in our deliverance from Egypt, and at mount*
Sinai, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy
4 presence. For since the beginning of the world [men] have
not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen,
O God, beside thee, [what] he hath prepared for him that
waiteth for him; *or, as in the margin of our bibles, neither hath*
the eye seen a God beside thee which doeth so for him that waiteth
5 *for him.** Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh right-
eousness, *that is, thou meetest with thy favour, or with joy, those*
who serve thee cheerfully, [those that] remember thee in thy
ways, *who observe and own thy providence, and regard thee in*
every merciful and afflictive event: behold, thou art wroth; for
we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be sav-
ed; *that is, in those ways of thine, especially thy ways of mercy,*
there is continuance: thy mercy is everlasting, therefore we shall
6 *be saved.*† But we are all as an unclean [thing,] and all our
righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; *our best services are im-*
perfect, defective, and mixed with pollution: and we all do fade
as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away;
as the wind doth a withered leaf, thou hast driven us out of our
7 *land, and deprived us of good.* And [there is] none that calleth
upon thy name, *none who is earnest in his intercession for us,*
that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee, *to avert the judg-*
ment; an allusion to holding a man's hand when he is going to
strike: for, *or rather, therefore,* thou hast hid thy face from us,
8 and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now, O
LORD, thou [art] our father; we [are] the clay, and thou our
potter; and we all [are] the work of thy hand.

* This speaks the unsearchable wisdom and grace of God in his scheme for the salvation of his people; as if he had said, Thou hast not yet done thy utmost, there is still more in reserve.

† Lowth translates it: *Lo, thou art angry (for we have sinned) because of our deeds, for we have been rebellious.*

9 Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity
for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we [are] all thy people;
10 *thy peculiar, covenant people, and not thy creatures only.* Thy
holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a
desolation, *even Sion and Jerusalem, the upper and lower city, and*
11 *all the cities of the holy land also, are desolate.* Our holy and our
beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up
with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste; *not only*
12 *the temple, but the palace and the synagogues are destroyed.* Wilt
thou refrain thyself for these [things,] O LORD? wilt thou hold
thy peace, and afflict us very sore? *Wilt thou neither show compassion to us, nor execute judgment upon those that oppress us?*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us learn to entertain high thoughts of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God. What a beautiful idea of them is there in this chapter! He is able, and intends, to do what his people have never seen nor heard of before; something beyond their highest conception. The apostle accommodates this remark to the gospel dispensation, 1 *Cor.* ii. 9. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man* to conceive, *the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;* because it revealed glorious things, which human wisdom could not discover. It is also applicable to the future state of the righteous; for we can form no idea equal to what God intends for them. As we desire to be the objects of divine favour, and to share in the blessings of his people, let us wait for him in the way of duty, and love him with all our hearts.

2. Let us observe the character of good men, as it is here described; examine ourselves by it, and endeavour to answer it in our conduct. *He will meet them who rejoice and work righteousness,* who are faithful and constant in the discharge of their whole duty, and who do it cheerfully. Let us rejoice in God, in our relation and obligations to him. Let us *remember him in his ways,* whether of judgment or mercy; and accommodate our temper to his various providences. He will then *meet us;* admit us to converse with him; visit us with his favour, and show himself as our friend and helper.

3. We are taught our duty in times of public trouble, and that is, humbly to bewail our sins before God; our guilt and pollution, and the imperfection of our righteousness; to deprecate the continuance of his anger, and entreat his kind and powerful appearances for us; to seek his mercy to remove our calamities, and his grace to reform our manners. On this errand we may comfortably apply to him, as our Creator and Father, who has shown so much goodness in our creation and support; and much more, as our God in Jesus Christ. But let us remember, that if we desire these blessings, we

must *stir up ourselves to take hold on God*; do all we can to quicken our spirits; and engage all that is within us in this important work. Then we may hope that our prayers will prevail, and that *God will stir up his strength, and come and save us.*

CHAP. LXV.

This chapter is an answer to the people's complaint in the foregoing one, of God's rejecting them; informing them that it was for their sins, especially their rejection of Christ, when the Gentiles received him; and it concludes with promises of their future restoration.

1 I AM sought of [them that] asked not [for me;] I am found of [them that] sought me not; *I am sought now of them that asked not after me before, (thus St. Paul interprets the words, Rom.* ix. 25, *&c. and ch.* x. 20.) I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation [that] was not called by my name; *I manifested*
2 *myself to them, and invited them to seek me.* I have spread out my hands all the day *with great earnestness* unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way [that was] not good, after their own thoughts; *after their corrupt doctrines and superstitious ways*
3 *of worship;* A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense up-
4 on altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, *who use abominable rites in honour of the dead, or to consult them,* which eat swine's flesh, *though forbidden by the law, because used in idolatrous rites among the heathen,* and broth of abominable [things is in] their vessels, *such as a kid*
5 *seethed in its mother's milk;** Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou; *valuing themselves on their own sanctity, and counting others unclean and profane: an exact description of the character of the Pharisees in Christ's time.* These [are] a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the
6 day; *they are offensive, as the smoke of wet wood.* Behold, [it is] written before me, *I will not forget it;* I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,
7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom; *I will take their former and latter sins into account when I come to punish them as a nation. Nevertheless there shall be a remnant according to the election of grace: for*

* It is objected that this cannot be applied to the Jews after their captivity, because they were then free from idolatry; but it may refer partly to the idolatry of their fathers, as in v. 7. It chiefly describes their wickedness in Christ's time, in language taken from their ancient manner of transgressing; it is a kind of proverbial expression for worshipping God in a way that he hath not directed, as incense and a pure sacrifice are put for gospel worship; or it may refer to their complying with popish idolatry to avoid persecution, as many of the Jews yet do.

8 Thus saith the LORD, as the new wine, *or rather, a good grape,*
is found in the cluster, and [one] saith, Destroy it not, for a
blessing [is] in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may
not destroy them all; *as when a man who is pruning a vine, and*
cutting out the dead branches, sees a cluster likely to ripen, he leaves
it, saying, these will become good grapes; so some of the Jews
shall be converted, and some of the unbelievers shall be spared, in
hope that a better generation will rise out of them: as it follows;
9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an
inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my
10 servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,
and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in,
for my people that have sought me.*
11 But ye [are] they that forsake the LORD, that forget my
holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, *for Gad*, and
that furnish the drink offering unto that number, *that is, to*
12 *Meni.*† *But because ye choose a number of idols*, Therefore will
I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the
slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I
spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did
choose [that] wherein I delighted not, *what was most odious to*
13 *me.* Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants,
true believers in Christ, shall eat, but ye, *unbelievers*, shall be
hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be
thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be
14 ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but
ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation
15 of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my
chosen; *according to the proverb, 'He is as miserable as a Jew;'*
or the execration, 'God make thee like a Jew:' for the Lord GOD
shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name, *that is,*
Christians; or in general it may mean, that he will show them
16 *peculiar favour:* That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall
bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the
earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former
troubles, *or when the former provocations*, are forgotten, and be-
cause they are hid from mine eyes; *there shall be an utter ex-*
tirpation of idolatry, superstition, and wickedness, from among
them.
17 For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the
former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; *the final*
conversion of the Jews shall be a new and glorious state of things,
18 *superior to any before.* But be ye glad and rejoice for ever, *or,*
for the age to come, [in that] which I create: for, behold I cre-
19 ate Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will
rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of
weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying;

* Sharon lay to the west, and Achor to the east; so that it intimates, that the whole country should be peopled and become fruitful.

† It is uncertain what particular idols these were.

20 *the former occasions of grief shall cease.* There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner [being] an hundred years old shall be accursed; *(figures taken from the antediluvian state:) men shall live to a great age, and not die when they begin to grow old; he that is an hundred years old shall be reckoned but as a child; and if a man die at an hundred years, he shall be esteemed a grievous sinner, who hath provoked God, by some aggravated offence, to shorten his days.*
21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit [them;] and they shall
22 plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree [are] the days of my people, *they shall revive as a tree does in the spring*, and mine elect shall long enjoy
23 the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they [are] the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them; *their children shall*
24 *live, shall be well provided for, and be a holy seed.* And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear; *I will prevent them with the*
25 *blessings of my goodness.* The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust [shall be] the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD; *there shall be no persecution nor severity among them, but perfect harmony and friendship; the serpent shall not fly upon men and bite them, but appear as an innocent reptile.**

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us bless God that he hath fulfilled his promise to the Gentiles. *They knew not God*, nor did they seek after him; but he made himself known to them; invited them to seek him, and return to him. This is the happy case of our land. O that we may be duly sensible of the divine goodness herein. When he calls to us, let us hear his voice and learn his ways; and let not our ministers have reason to complain of any of us, that *they have stretched out their hands to a disobedient and rebellious people.*

2. We may observe how offensive spiritual pride is to God. A black character is here given of the Jews, and no part of it is represented to be so offensive to God as their hypocrisy and self conceit, which generally go together. This is illustrated by our Lord's reproof of the pharisees. *They trusted that they were righteous, and despised others;* looked upon all who did not observe their superstitions, as unclean. A temper much resembling this is too common among christians, which discovers itself in their unreasonable attachment either to some peculiar notions which they term orthodoxy, or

* Bp Sherlock understands it as referring to the sentence on the serpent at the fall, that Satan should be subdued and bound, be stripped of his influence over the souls of men, and the curse of God executed upon him and his seed.

to some unscriptural rites, in which they place the whole of religion; and are too ready to say to others, *We are holier than you.* But such a temper as this is highly displeasing to God, *v.* 5. Those are often, yea, generally, the most unholy, who think themselves most holy. *Let us beware therefore, lest, being lifted up with pride, we fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

3. We see what a difference God makes and will make between his servants and his enemies. This difference is here specified, and their respective conditions are set one over against the other. His servants have comfort in their earthly enjoyments; true peace, pleasure, and joy; and they are really honourable. While his enemies are strangers to true pleasure; are, and will be, contemptible. Let God's servants therefore be thankful for his grace manifested to them; and let his enemies tremble to think, how much worse their state will be hereafter, when *the righteous shall be comforted, while they are tormented.*

4. When God is doing great things for his church, it becomes us to observe and rejoice in them, *v.* 18. He is able to do great things for them; as great, as making a new heaven and a new earth; and he will do it in his time. He will rejoice over his people himself; and it becomes us to rejoice with them, and take a part in their pleasure and gratitude. In the mean time, let us rejoice in the assurance and prospect of this happy period, and in every instance in which religion revives, and there are added to the church such as shall be saved.

CHAP. LXVI.

This chapter consists of two parts; v. 1—7, *is a reproof to the Jews for laying such a stress on the temple and temple worship in Christ's time, with an intimation that God would change it. In this view Stephen quotes it, Acts* vii. 49, 50.

1 THUS saith the LORD, The heaven [is] my throne, and
the earth [is] my footstool: where [is] the house that ye
build unto me? and where [is] the place of my rest? *where is*
the temple that suits my majesty, and where I may take up my
2 *rest without any thought of a departure?* For all those [things]
hath mine hand made, and all those [things] have been, *or rather, are mine,* saith the LORD: but to this [man] will I look,
[even] to [him that is] poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word; *who possesses habitual humility and seriousness,*
3 *and revereth my word. Without this devout temper,* He that killeth an ox [is as if] he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb,
[as if] he cut off a dog's neck;* he that offereth an oblation,

* This was one of the sacrifices used by the heathens at the death of their friends, mentioned by Homer.

[as if he offered] swine's blood; he that burneth incense, [as if] he blessed an idol; *the sacrifices of the unbelieving Jews will not be acceptable to God, but very provoking to him.* Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their
4 abominations, *or, their superstitions.* I also will choose their delusions; *they shall be slaves to tradition and be deluded by false Christs,* and will bring their fears upon them; *probably the Romans, for fear of whom they crucified Christ;* because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose [that] in which I delighted not.

5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to
6 your joy, and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple,* a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies; *to the unbelieving Jews, who shall be left to perish in the destruction of the city; while the christians, being warned by Christ, shall fly to the mountains and be secure. The remainder of the chapter refers, I think, to the glorious state of the Jews in the latter day.*

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came,
8 she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth, *to produce fruit in all its perfection,* in one day? [or] shall a nation be born at once? *without growing up, without any pain and difficulty, or any ill accident?* for as soon as Zion tra-
9 vailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut [the womb?] saith thy God; *Shall I disappoint the expectations of my people, and fail to perform my work, when every thing is ripe for execution? Then follows an address to gentile christians, who had mourned over the*
10 *calamitous state of the Jews for many ages.* Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, rejoice for
11 joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory, *or stores; as if he had said, That ye may be edified or delighted, by*
12 *the gifts and graces bestowed upon the Jewish church.* For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace, *or happiness,* to her like a river, and the glory of the gentiles like a flowing stream, *by the liberality and kindness of the Jews on their conversion:* then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon [her] sides, and be dandled upon [her] knees, *as young children are by a fond and*
13 *tender parent.* As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem, *by the re-*
14 *turn of the divine favour to it.* And when ye see [this,] your heart

* This is addressed to the believing Jews, who were excommunicated under a pretence of zeal for God, and persecuted in every city to which their enemies had access.

shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb; *that is, the Jews shall recover their ancient strength and beauty; according to St. Paul, it shall be as life from the dead:* and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and [his] indignation toward his enemies.

15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his
16 rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall
17 be many.* They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one [tree] in the midst, *according to the rites of Achad, or an image of the sun in the garden of Achad, called, One, or the one great being, (a name given him by the ancient Persians, who used to sacrifice seven bats and seven mice to the sun,)* eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

18 For I [know] their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory, *which shall be displayed in converting the*
19 *Jews, and in destroying their enemies.* And I will set a sign, *or standard,* among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, [to] Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, [to] Tubal, and Javan, [to] the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the gentiles; *I will send some of the believing Jews to convert the Gentiles that yet remain in a state of ignorance and idolatry; or to their own brethren that are not gathered with*
20 *them.* And they shall bring all your brethren [for] an offering unto the LORD, *(as St. Paul calls the conversion of the Gentiles, Rom.* xv. 16.) out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD; *I will bring them in a swift, easy, and commodious manner, and take care that they be conveniently accommodated in their journey.*

21 And I will also take of them for priests [and] for Levites, saith the LORD; *the Jews shall again become a kingdom of priests, and*
22 *take pains to spread the gospel.* For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain; *this new state of things shall continue, and the Jews, when once converted, shall*
23 *remain to the end a faithful people.* And it shall come to pass, [that] from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD: *gospel worship is described by these figures; as if he had said, The stated seasons of worship shall be regularly attended upon; yea, they shall keep one continued festival, and be habitually*

* This refers to the destruction of those enemies that shall come to attack the Jews after their settlement, supposed to be the Tartars and other barbarous nations from the north, who are idolaters.

24 *devout and holy*. And they shall go forth *from Jerusalem* and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; *they shall see their enemies slain, as in v.* 16, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh; *men shall abhor them as they do the stench of a dead carcass; they shall appear a lively emblem of the torments of hell, and God's faithful servants shall look upon them to excite their joy and thankfulness.**

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us learn from hence a proper temper for divine worship and acceptance. We should think of that glorious Being whose throne is heaven, and earth his footstool, as a spiritual omniscient Being; whom no temple can contain, or be equal to his grandeur; who yet makes every humble heart his temple, and delights in the contrite, reverent worshipper. Let us approach him with a holy awe of his majesty, and an habitual sense of his purity. Vain are the most costly sacrifices, without a pious and devout heart, and delighting ourselves in his commandments.

2. It is no new thing to see the best of God's servants persecuted under a pretence of religion. The same bigotted spirit which prevailed among the Jews, which led them to persecute the apostles and first christians, hath too often shown itself in the world since; and even to this day they are *cast out and evil entreated*, because they adhere to God's pure worship and institutions. While zeal for God and the purity of religion is pretended, their end is to gratify their own pride, covetousness, and revenge. Let us not wonder at such scenes, but have no hand in such practices.

3. We see how easily God can multiply and increase his church; and how much reason we have to expect that he will perfect his own work. He expresses this in terms taken from the strongest and tenderest of human affections. However glorious and extensive his promises may be, they shall all be accomplished; and not one of his good words shall fall to the ground. This is a great encouragement to labour and pray for the increase of the church.

4. Let us do our endeavour to *bring our brethren as an offering to the Lord*. Have we devoted ourselves to him? Let us exhort and encourage others to join themselves to the church; even all that we can influence. Let us persuade them to *present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God*. This will be an act of the greatest kindness to them, and a labour of love highly pleasing to the Lord.

* As this is a prophecy of events yet to happen, no wonder that there is much darkness upon it; the general meaning of these figurative expressions seems to be this: that God will, by an extraordinary energy of his Spirit, awaken the Jews to search their scriptures, and see Christ to be their Messiah, and believe in him. This remarkable change in them shall impress Mahometans, heathens, and deists, (who may probably be more numerous hereafter) and they shall be disposed to embrace the gospel. And they will have so great a respect for the Jews, as honourably to convey them to their own land, which they will easily conquer. Soon after their settlement there, a violent attack shall be made upon them, probably by the northern nations, who shall be suddenly destroyed by the power of God.

5. Wherever God has a church, the solemn exercises of worship are to be maintained. We see this required under every dispensation, Abrahamic, Jewish, and Christian. And it is foretold, that in the latter day *all flesh shall come and worship before God.* There are to be stated times of worship to the end of the world. *All flesh are to come*, men, women, and children; neither the greatest nor the poorest will be excused. Therefore *let us not forsake the assembling ourselves together*, since God commands it, and promises his blessing with it.

6. As a proper conclusion of this book, we may learn to pity the case of the poor Jews, and firmly to expect, and earnestly to pray for, their conversion. It is very wrong to persecute, or even to despise them; *for a blessing is in them.* Our duty is, as it is expressed in *v.* 10. *to mourn for them.* They are standing, incontestable evidences of the truth of the gospel, and of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments; being kept a distinct people, notwithstanding the cruel manner in which they have been persecuted and reproached. They are not cast off for ever; God intends great things for them; and at length, as a nation they shall be restored, and all that mourn for them shall rejoice with them. *Let our hearts' desire and prayer to God for Israel be, that they may be saved.*

The Book of the Prophet JEREMIAH.*

CHAPTER I.

Contains the prophet's general commission, and the promises of divine assistance.

1 THE words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests
that [were] in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, *about*
2 *three miles from Jerusalem:* To whom the word of the LORD
came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in

* As Mr. Orton has said nothing of Jeremiah, nor of the time in which he lived, I have taken the liberty to prefix Dr. Smith's introduction to this prophet. It seems to be a judicious abstract from Dr. Blayney's notes on Jeremiah.

'Jeremiah was a priest of the tribe of Benjamin, and called to the prophetic office when very young. He entered upon it about seventy years after the death of Isaiah, and exercised it for about forty two years, with great faithfulness and zeal, and in very unfavourable circumstances. At the time that he began to prophesy, the sins of the Jews were come to their full measure. After a reformation had been in vain attempted by Josiah, to punish a nation, unworthy of such a sovereign, God called him early away. His two sons, who successively mounted the throne after him, were as remarkable for vice, as the father was for virtue. The first, (Shallum, or Jehoahaz) after a reign of three months, was carried captive to Egypt, where he died: his brother Jehoiakim, on condition of paying a large sum of money to the king of Egypt, was allowed to succeed him; but the Babylonians, about three years after, having made a descent on Judea, and taken Jerusalem, he was obliged to swear fealty to the king of Babylon, who carried him with a number of captives, among whom were many of the children of the first families, together with a great part of the sacred vessels of the temple. Jehoiakim however was left in possession of the throne, on condition of his paying a yearly tribute; but refusing to fulfil his promise after the first three years, the king of Babylon sent some forces, joined by the Syrians and Ammonites, to commit depredations on his country. This they did for several years, always carrying off spoils and captives. Jehoiakim, in attempting to repel one of their invasions, was slain without the gates of the city, and his body, after having been treated with much ignominy, was cast into the fields without the honours of a burial. His son Jeconiah, though very young, succeeded him; and in rebellion and vice followed his example. After a reign of only three months, Nebuchadnezzar, who had come to Judea in person, carried him, and almost all the people of any note in the country, captive to Babylon. The golden vessels, that had remained in the temple, were likewise carried off at this time. Zedekiah, uncle to Jeconiah, was permitted to succeed him, on swearing allegiance and becoming tributary to the king of Babylon: but, relying on the assistance of Egypt, he revolted soon after, and drew on himself and on his country the full vengeance of the Babylonian monarch, as related in the fifty second chapter. The subsequent transactions of the murder of Gedaliah (who was left governor in the country) and the retreat of the remaining Jews into Egypt, (whither they were accompanied by Jeremiah, who is said to have been there put to death) may be seen from chapter forty to forty four inclusively. Soon after the taking of Jerusalem, and the carrying of Judah into captivity, Nebuchadnezzar brought on the Tyrians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Philistines, and other neighbouring nations, that destruction which the prophets of God foretold and threatened; he likewise ravaged Egypt, and either killed or enslaved all the Jews who had fled thither for refuge. Thus matters stood, till, at the precise period foretold by Isaiah and the other prophets, the Babylonian monarchy was overturned, and the Jews restored to their liberty and their country by Cyrus. This short view of the history of Jeremiah's times, may in some measure help us to understand his prophecies, of which the general subjects are, the idolatry and other sins of the Jews; the judgments that were impending on that account, together with their future restoration and deliverance, interspersed with several intimations of the Messiah. From this account, however, we must except the forty fifth chapter, which relates to his disciple Baruch, and the six following, which respect the fate of other nations.

The style of Jeremiah is beautiful and tender to a high degree; especially when he has occasion to excite the softer passions of grief and pity, which is not seldom the case in the first parts of the prophecy. It is likewise on many occasions very elegant and sublime, especially toward the end, (*ch.* xlv. li.) where this prophet approaches even to the majesty of Isaiah. The historical narratives which are occasionally introduced, are written in a plain prosaic style, which is the fittest for narratives.'

The chapters are not now arranged according to the order of time in which they were delivered: but of this notice will be taken in the course of the exposition.

3 the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Je-
hoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the
eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto
the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month, *when*
the city and temple were destroyed; so that he prophesied about
forty two years, and lived to see most of his prophecies fulfilled.
4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me *in a vision*, saying,
5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, *I had thee in my*
view, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified
thee, *set thee apart for this office*, [and] I ordained thee a prophet
6 unto the nations, *to other nations as well as to the Jews.** Then
said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I [am] a
child; *I cannot speak with due gravity and authority before great*
7 *personages.* But the LORD said unto me, Say not I [am] a
child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and what-
8 soever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their
faces *when they look big and angry:* for I [am] with thee to de-
liver thee, saith the LORD. *A necessary encouragement, as I was*
to reprove the princes and priests for their faults, as well as the
people: and, to confirm me against my fears, he gave me a sign;
9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth.
And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in
thy mouth; *I have given thee the gift of utterance, and instructed*
10 *thee in my will.* See, I have this day set thee over the nations
and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to
destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant; *I have com-*
missioned thee to foretell the destruction of some kingdoms, and the
preservation and restoration of others.†
11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jere-
miah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond
12 tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen, *or*
judged right: for I will hasten my word to perform it; *as an*
almond is one of the first trees that blossoms in the spring, and
hastens as it were to seize the first opportunity to blossom, so I will
13 *hasten the accomplishment of thy predictions.* And the word of
the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest
thou? And I said, I see a seething pot, *a boiling pot, or furnace;*
and the face thereof [is] toward the north; *the mouth of the*
furnace, into which the fire was put, opened to the north; or rather,
(as in the margin of our bibles) from the face of the north, from
14 *whence the evil was to come.* Then the LORD said unto me, Out
of the north, *that is, from the Babylonians and Chaldeans*, an evil
shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land; *they shall*
throw the city and country into all the agitation and confusion of a
15 *boiling furnace.* For, lo, I will call all the families of the king-

* This was designed for his encouragement, and is exactly agreeable to the account St. Paul gives of himself, *Gal.* i. 15, 16.

† The prophets are said to do what they declared God would do; and as it was customary with God to impress the minds of the prophets and people by certain signs or emblems, so he does here.

doms of the north, saith the LORD; *the king of Babylon and his allies, a numerous army;* and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates at Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah; *they shall encamp against and take possession of*
16 *their cities and palaces.* And I will utter my judgments, *pass sentence and execute judgment* against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands; *my judgments shall declare their wickedness, and my indignation con-*
17 *firm the truth of thy prophecies.* Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, *go about it vigorously and resolutely,* and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them; *lest I make thee ashamed of thy cowardice, and bring upon thee that which thou fearest.*
18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, *I have made thee like a city fortified with pillars of iron and walls of brass,* against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, *who shall batter thee with their power,* against the priests thereof; *who will thunder their church censures against thee,* and against the people of the land, *who will shoot out their arrows, even bitter*
19 *words.* And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I [am] with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee; *they shall not be able on the whole to hurt thee.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WHOMSOEVER God commissions for any service, he will qualify and help. He knows what use to make of every man; sees what services they are fit for; and if he calls them out to difficult work, they may expect, and, if they follow his providence, may depend upon, peculiar assistance. Though a modest diffidence is very becoming in all, especially in young persons, yet there is a false modesty which ought to be avoided. This prevents many from praying in their families, or with their friends, and from speaking of divine things. But when God calls us out to difficult services, we must not make excuses, but cheerfully undertake them, in a dependence on that help of his Spirit which he has promised; so that *as our day is, our strength shall be.*

2. We see that courage and zeal becomes the Lord's prophets and ministers. They are to speak all that he commands; *and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God.* They are to reprove and admonish faithfully and tenderly; and this requires great resolution. If they shun their duty for fear of the reproach and contempt of men, God will make them contemptible. If they are faithful, he will bear them up, and make them honourable in the eyes of all that are wise and good.

3. *The fear of man bringeth a snare.* This was the prophet Jeremiah's infirmity, and it prevails upon many to neglect their duty,

and to comply with sinful, dangerous customs. The fear of being reproached or laughed at, leads many young persons in particular, into guilt, shame, and ruin. The best preservative against this snare is the fear of God; a reverence of his authority, a sense of his presence, and a dread of being confounded and condemned by him. It is therefore excellent advice of our Lord, which we should always remember and act upon, *Fear not them who can kill the body; but fear him, who can kill the body and cast the soul into hell; I say unto you, Fear him.*

CHAP. II. 1—20.

We had the prophet's commission in the former chapter; here he enters on his work; and in this part of the chapter represents to the Jews their ingratitude to God, their unparalleled wickedness, and the dishonour and ruin they were bringing on themselves by it.

1 MOREOVER the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
2 Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land [that was] not sown; *I remember thy obedience and subjection, when thou wast first formed into a people, and entered into a covenant with God at mount Sinai, when thou followedst the cloud, and attendedst the service of the tabernacle.** Israel
3 [was] holiness unto the LORD, [and] the first fruits of his increase; *like the first fruits, they are peculiarly valuable in his sight:* all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD; *I will severely punish all that shall attack*
4 *them.* Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and
5 all the families of the house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, *what injustice, unfaithfulness, or unkindness,* that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? *that they have*
6 *practised idolatry and are become like the heathen?* Neither said they, Where [is] the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, *they forgat the kindness I showed to their fathers,* that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?
7 *where there was no thoroughfare, no dwelling?* And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination *by your sins, especially idol-*
8 *atry. And it is no wonder you did so, for* The priests said not, Where [is] the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me

* Or rather, according to Dr. Blayney, *I have called to mind in thy behalf the kindness shown thee in thy youth, &c.*

not ; *they took no pains to learn and preach my will :* the pastors also, *the governors and magistrates,* transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, *in the name of Baal,* and walked after [things that] do not profit ; *that were extremely*
9 *hurtful ; this was the source of their degeneracy.* Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead : *I will lay before you your ingrati-*
10 *tude and sin, both by prophets and judgments :* For pass over the isles of Chittim, *the profiter nations of Europe,* and see ; and send unto Kedar, *the barbarous nations that lay south east,* and con-
11 sider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed [their] gods, which [are] yet no gods ? *they keep to the religion of their forefathers, though it be false, absurd, and impious :* but my people have changed their glory, *their relation to God, and his presence among them,* for [that which] doth not
12 profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD ; *it is such a thing, that the sun might veil his face at the sight, and the lights of heav-*
13 *en shrink away and vanish from their places :* For my people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, [and] hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water ; *by worshipping idols and forming alliances with idolatrous princes, they have acted as foolishly as a man would do who should forsake a pure running stream, for a little muddy water in a cistern, and that a broken cistern, out of which the water, such as it was, would quickly run.*
14 [Is] Israel a servant ? [is] he a homeborn [slave ?] why is he spoiled ? *Why is Israel a slave to his enemies ? was he born such a one ? No : but he is spoiled as if he were, and this is owing*
15 *to his sin.* The young lions roared upon him, [and] yelled, and they made his land waste : his cities are burned without inhab-
16 itant, *by the tyrannical kings of the neighbouring countries.* Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes, *two principal cities of Egypt,* have broken the crown of thy head ; *the Egyptians have devoured the best part of thy country, and sunk thee into contempt.*
17 Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way ? *when he was leading thee, and would have been thy help and insured thy*
18 *prosperity ?* And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor, *or the Nile ?* or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river *Eu-*
19 *phrates, that is, to form alliances with Egypt and Assyria ?* Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee : know therefore and see that [it is] an evil [thing] and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear [is] not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts ; *thy sin shall be thy punishment ; the princes thou hast courted shall be a scourge to thee ; and thy calamities shall convince thee, what a foolish, wicked part thou hast acted, in forsaking God.*

REFLECTIONS.

Adapted to a fast, or day of humiliation.

1. THE piety of our ancestors, and God's kindness to them and us, aggravate national ingratitude and impiety. Israel is reminded of their ancestors, who were *holy to the Lord*, and of the many favours he had shown to them. And when we come to humble ourselves before God, it is highly proper to consider these aggravations of our guilt. Did our ancestors express a fervent love to God, and zeal in his services? Were his favours to them favours to us? Have we received many new and most important ones from him? How odious must our ingratitude be, and how heinous will our guilt appear? He hath brought us, as a nation, from the bondage of popery and arbitrary power; led us through many perils; given us a plentiful country, and succeeded our struggles against foreign and domestic enemies. He hath given us good governors, and skilful, faithful interpreters of his law. How provoking then must be the guilt of such a people! how much need is there of humiliation!

2. We learn the folly and vanity of trusting in creatures, to the neglect of God. The Israelites were always courting idols, and idolatrous alliances, while they forsook their God and king. Our epidemical sin, as a nation, is forgetting God and trusting in our own wisdom and strength. This is forsaking a fountain for a broken cistern; and what can we expect but disappointment? what have we to do *to make flesh our arm*, when we have a God of almighty power and everlasting goodness to trust in? This were folly and madness; and it becomes us to be upon our guard, lest we be chargeable with it; and to implore mercy for our nation, since it is a temper that so generally prevails.

3. When a nation suffers calamities, it is owing to its sins. The Israelites are several times reminded of this in the passages we have been reading. The neighbouring princes were confederates against them, and brought much desolation upon them. But hast not thou procured this to thyself? When our enemies are multiplied, and our danger increased, may not the same question be put to us? God was leading us by the way, leading us to peace and prosperity; our prospects were promising; but our sins hid those good things from us, engaged us in fresh quarrels, and exposed us to further and greater evils. Our wickedness is in this instance correcting us; and it becomes us to bewail it before God, and to reform; lest we find by further dreadful experience, what an evil and bitter thing it is to have forsaken God, and cast off his fear.

4. God will be justified in the judgments which he brings upon a wicked nation. He pleads with Israel, to show them that his judgments were righteous, and their calamities deserved. The same appeal may be made to us. What iniquity have we found in God, that we should have deserted his service, or have been cold and formal in

it? Has it been either unpleasant or unprofitable? What could he have done more for us, that he has not done? We are worse than the heathens, for they do not change their gods, nor are they so indifferent about their worship. This will fully vindicate a just God, if he punishes us as our ingratitude and iniquities have deserved. But while he condescends thus to plead with us, and to display his former mercy, it gives us encouragement to return. The design of these remonstrances to Israel was to lead them to repentance, and prevent their ruin. God grant they may have a good effect upon our minds; engage us to return to God; and to *know, in this our day, the things that belong to our peace, before they are for ever hid from our eyes.*

CHAP. II. 20, to the end. CHAP. III. 1—6.

The prophet continues his expostulations with the people for their wickedness.

20 FOR of old time I have broken thy yoke, [and] burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; *when I delivered thee from Egypt, thou didst promise at mount Sinai to be obedient, and didst behave well when first settled in Canaan;* when, *or yet,* upon every high hill and under every green tree
21 thou wanderest, playing the harlot. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? *I gave you a good constitution of government, excellent laws and ordinances, yet*
22 *now ye are become corrupt and degenerate.* For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, [yet] thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD; *though thou insistest upon thy innocence, and justifiest thyself, yet thine iniquities*
23 *are all known to me.** How canst thou say I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, *where thy idolatrous worship is performed, especially the sacrificing of thy children, and* know what thou hast done: [thou art] a swift dromedary traversing her ways, *running from one idol to another;*
24 A wild ass used to the wilderness, [that] snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her; *like an ass, which at one time cannot be catched, but which in her month (when big and unwieldy) is easy to be caught; so you shall in a little time feel the burden of your own ini-*
25 *quities.* Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go; *as an ass, which con-*

* They had contrived a way to reconcile the worship of idols with the worship of Jehovah, pretending it was only subordinate worship; a pitiful distinction, which papists still use to defend their idolatry.

tinues with its owner, will be shod, and have plenty of food, but when it runs away, will wear out its hoofs, and want both food and water; so thy idolatries will be injurious and destructive; yet thou dost
26 *desperately resolve to go on in thy evil ways.* As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; *they have nothing to say, but, like an hardened robber, imprudently deny the fact;* they, their kings, their princes, and their priests,
27 and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou [art] my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth; *giving that praise to idols which is due to God alone, as the author and preserver of all things:* for they have turned [their] back unto me *in contempt,* and not [their] face: but in the time of their trouble they
28 will say, Arise, and save us. But where [are] thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for [according to] the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; *every city hath its peculiar gods,*
29 *like the heathens.* Wherefore will ye plead with me *your innocence and my promises?* ye all have transgressed against me,
30 saith the LORD. In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction; *they are not grown better:* your own sword hath devoured your prophets, *who reproved you,* like a destroy-
31 ing lion, *with fury and pleasure, as a lion devours his prey.* O generation, see ye the word of the LORD; *consider it and apply your hearts to it.* Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; *we are an independent people;* we will come no more unto thee; *we*
32 *can save ourselves, we have no need of thee.* Can a maid forget her ornaments, [or] a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number; *they have renounced their re-*
33 *lation to me, which was their greatest glory.* Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love, *like a lewd woman, who by gay dress and artful looks endeavours to inveigle others?* therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways, *and been an example*
34 *of heinous wickedness to others.* Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these; *in every part of the land the murder of your children is as plain, as if your garments were sprinkled with their blood; by which means murder is sometimes discovered.*

35 Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou
36 sayest, I have not sinned, *and prove the contrary.* Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way, *flying from one alliance to another? a plain proof that you have forsaken me:* thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.
37 Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, *or from hence, that is, from thy own country,* and thine hands upon thine head, *as mourners, and in token of thy extreme grief:* for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.

1 CHAP. III. They say, *it is a known adjudged case*, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted *by such detestable practices?* but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, *by thine alliances with idolaters;* yet return again to me, saith the LORD, *and I will receive thee*
2 *into favour.* Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness, *that waits for the caravans to buy goods; thou hast been no more ashamed to sit by the way side as a prostitute, than a merchant is to deal with his customers;* and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms
3 and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a
4 whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou [art] the guide of my youth? *and return to God, as thy husband, before thou art quite ruined? wilt thou not from this time do it, when thou art so graciously invited, and there are so many threatenings of sad judg-*
5 *ments if thou continuest obstinate?* Will he reserve [his anger] for ever? will he keep [it] to the end?* Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst.

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW vain are all the attempts of sinners to justify themselves in an evil way! They, like Israel, are fond of doing it; they deny the fact, plead innocence, and say they are not polluted. Yet all their iniquity is marked before God; *their secret sins are in the light of his countenance;* and when he comes to plead with them, and set his law and their sins in order before them, they will be overwhelmed with shame and confusion. May we learn to guard against self deceit. We cannot plead innocence nor vindicate our conduct; therefore we should humbly and thankfully submit to the terms of the gospel.

2. They who forsake the service of God, change for the worse; change their God, for those which are no gods; their glory, for that which is their shame and reproach; like an untractable beast, that forsaking a good master is exposed to want and ruin. But men do not consider what their sins will bring them to at last. God is not a wilderness to his people; his service is both pleasant and profitable; but if we desert it, we run into shame, misery, and ruin; and their case will be the worst of all, who do this after they have promised that they will not transgress.

3. The vanity and insufficiency of earthly things will abundantly appear in the day of trouble. Men will not hearken in the day of prosperity; but when sickness and death come upon them, their

* These are words put into their mouth wherewith to approach God; yet there was little hope of their using them, because they had shown all hatred to God and goodness.

spirits will be tamed. They now reject reproof, and scorn advice; but when distress and anguish come upon them, where are their gods, their honours, and gay friends and companions? let them arise, and save them, if they can, in times of trouble: but here they will find disappointment. The Lord hath rejected such confidences, and men can never prosper in them. But if we make God our hope and portion, and his service our business, we may cheerfully say to him, in our time of trouble, *Arise, and save us*; and he will be our refuge and strength.

4. How kind is God to invite sinners to return, and put proper words and encouragements into their mouths. Though a man will not receive an adulterous wife, yet God invites sinners to return to him. He will not reserve his anger for ever, *because he delighteth in mercy*. Let rebellious children return to him as their father from this time, when he again invites them, and he will have compassion upon them, will subdue their iniquities, and cast all their sins into the depth of the sea.

CHAP. III. 6, to the end. CHAP. IV. 1—3.

In order to understand this part of the prophecy, we must remember, that it refers to the time of Josiah, a very zealous reformer: the people were not hearty in his reformation; they only complied with it externally, and after his death relapsed into idolatry.

6 THE LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the
king, Hast thou seen [that] which backsliding Israel
hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and un-
7 der every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I
said, *by the prophets*, after she had done all these [things,] Turn
thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacher-
8 ous sister Judah saw [it.] And I saw, when for all the causes
whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her
away, and given her a bill of divorce, *that is, dissolved the spiritual relation between us; and she was carried captive*; yet her
treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the har-
9 lot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her
whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery
10 with stones and with stocks. And yet for all this, her treacher-
ous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart,
11 but feignedly, saith the LORD. And the LORD said unto me,
The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacher-
ous Judah; *Israel is less guilty than Judah, because Judah did not take warning.*

12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, *where the ten tribes were carried captive*, and say, Return, thou backsliding
Israel, saith the LORD; [and] I will not cause mine anger to
fall, *or continue*, upon you: for I [am] merciful, saith the LORD,

13 [and] I will not keep [anger] for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, *confess it, and be truly penitent for it*, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, *run up and down to the gods of neighbouring nations*, and ye have not obeyed
14 my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion; *ye shall be restored again; and though but few shall come, yet*
15 *those shall not be overlooked:* And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and
16 understanding, *and no more entice you to idolatry.* And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit [it;]
17 neither shall [that] be done any more.* At that time they shall call Jerusalem, The throne of the LORD; *God will give them evident proofs of his spiritual residence among them, and his regard to them as their king;* and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they
18 walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers; *many of the Israelites shall return with the Jews to Ca-*
19 *naan.* But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, *there must be a great change in you before I can do this*, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations; *or, a land which the nations desire, for they envy you this land, and desire to possess it?* and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me; *I will bestow upon thee a filial frame of heart toward me; thou shalt return to me as thy father, and continue faithful to me; then I will bestow these favours upon you.*

20 Surely [as] a wife treacherously departeth from her husband; so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith
21 the LORD. A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping [and] supplications of the children of Israel, *relenting and asking mercy:* for, *or because*, they have perverted their way, [and]
22 they have forgotten the LORD their God. Return ye backsliding children, [and] I will heal your backslidings. *This is God's invitation: to which they reply*, Behold, we come unto thee, for thou [art] the LORD our God, *and wilt heal and comfort*
23 *our hearts, which are wounded with grief and sorrow.* Truly in vain [is salvation hoped for] from the hills [and from] the multitude of mountains; *from idols, or any foreign alliances: it is in vain to go*

* This seems to refer to the gospel, and to intimate the abolition of Jewish ceremonies, though perhaps the ark never was in the second temple, at least there was no Shekinah; and some suppose there is a reference to that.

up to the mountains to look if they are coming : truly in the LORD
24 our God, [is] the salvation of Israel. For shame, *that is, sin and idolatry*, hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth ; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters ; *these have wasted our substance, and brought our*
25 *enemies upon us.* We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us ; *we are not able to bear up under it :* for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God. *In answer to these expressions of sorrow and repentance, God assures Israel,*

1 CHAP. IV. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me *heartily, not by outward profession only :* and if thou wilt put away thine abominations, *thine idols, and thy sins,* out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove, *but be established in*
2 *the land.* And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness ; *thou shalt no more swear by idols, but in important cases make thine appeal to God for the maintenance of truth and justice ;* and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory ; *many heathens shall become proselytes, shall esteem themselves happy in being the people of God, and shall triumph in their relation to him and interest in him.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE judgments of God upon others are designed as warnings to us, and he is displeased if they are not attended to. He expected that Judah should be alarmed by the captivity of Israel, and it was an aggravation of their guilt that they were not. God gives us many awful warnings by his word and providences; even the calamities of Israel and Judah, are standing warnings to us, and are so described in the New Testament. God knows what admonitions he hath given us, and what effect they have had; and if we overlook them and prove treacherous to our religious professions and engagements, we shall fall under his displeasure, for his power and wrath are against all them that forsake him.

2. The abundant mercy and reconcileableness of God, are motives to sinners to return to him. He commands his ministers and prophets to proclaim this ; to assure sinners of his readiness to forgive ; and invites them to return. May we hear the proclamation with gratitude and pleasure ; and let our answer be, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

3. It is happy for a people to have pastors after God's own heart; such as he approves on account of their character and fidelity in their office. They are good pastors in God's sight, who take care of the flock, endeavour to improve their understandings, mend their spirits, and make them wise to salvation. The people who have such pastors, (who are, alas ! too few) ought to be very thankful to God, and *esteem them highly in love for their work's sake.*

4. Let us diligently attend to the terms of forgiveness and acceptance with God. Sinners are to acknowledge their iniquities with shame and sorrow; to put away all their abominations, to return to him as their father, to cherish filial dispositions, to give themselves to prayer, to reverence the majesty and omniscience of God, to place all their happiness in his favour, to be faithful in all their declarations and promises, and never to turn away from the Lord. May this be our character. Then will he heal our backslidings, put us among his children, and give us a goodly heritage, even *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.*

CHAP. IV. 3, to the end.

This prophecy is addressed to Judah and Jerusalem; it is a call to repentance, and foretells their destruction by the Chaldeans.

3 FOR thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among
thorns; *be humble and penitent, otherwise you are like an hus-*
bandman who sows among thorns without ploughing, and the pro-
4 *duce is good for nothing.* Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; *mortify your corrupt affections, and do not content yourselves with external rites:* lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench [it,] because of the evil
5 of your doings. Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the
6 defenced cities *for security, against the Chaldeans.* Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil
7 from the north, and a great destruction. The lion is come up from his thicket, *Nebuchadnezzar is coming from Babylon,* and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way, *or, the scourge of nations, that hath made desolate the neighbouring countries, is on his march against you;* he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; [and] thy cities shall be laid waste
8 without an inhabitant. For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back
9 from us. And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, [that] the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes, *they shall be quite stupid and confounded;* and the priests, *that should blow the trumpet and encourage the people to war,* shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder, *that is,*
10 *the false prophets, that said the calamity should not come.* Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, *that is, thou hast permitted it to be done, hast suffered the false prophets to deceive them by strong delu-*

sions, saying, Ye shall have peace ; whereas the sword reach-
11 eth unto the soul. At that time shall it be said to this people
and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilder-
ness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to
cleanse, *but to destroy the fruits of the earth, to scatter and carry*
12 *them away ;* [Even] a full wind from those [places] shall come
unto me ; *or, as it is better rendered, a full wind for a curse shall*
come at my bidding, too strong for them to withstand : now also
13 will I give sentence against them. Behold, he shall come up as
clouds *that cover the sky*, and his chariots [shall be] as a whirl-
wind : his horses are swifter than eagles. Wo unto us ! for
14 we are spoiled. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wicked-
ness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain
thoughts lodge within thee ? *thy foolish devices, expectations,*
15 *and dependences, to which you have so long trusted :* For a voice
declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount
Ephraim ; *which lay north, nearest to Babylon, from whence the*
16 *tidings came.* Make ye mention to the nations ; behold, pub-
lish against Jerusalem, [that] watchers come from a far coun-
try, *soldiers that watch over them to do them mischief*, and give
out their voice against the cities of Judah, *who encourage one*
17 *another to fall on and subdue them.* As keepers of a field, are
they against her round about, *surrounding her cities ;* because
18 she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD. Thy way
and thy doings have procured these [things] unto thee ; this
[is] thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth un-
to thine heart *like a deadly wound.*

19 My bowels, my bowels ! I am pained at my very heart ; my
heart maketh a noise in me ; I cannot hold my peace, because
thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm
of war ; *I tenderly sympathize with my country in the prospect of*
20 *these miseries.* Destruction upon destruction is cried,* for the
whole land is spoiled : suddenly are my tents spoiled, [and] my
21 curtains in a moment, *as easily as tents are removed.* How long
shall I see the standard, [and] hear the sound of the trumpet ?
22 For my people [is] foolish, they have not known me ; they [are]
sottish children, and they have none understanding : they [are]
wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge ; *they*
are skilful in the arts of sin, but are strangers to religion ; they
23 *show no contrivance or quickness but when it is to do evil.* I be-
held the earth, and, lo, [it was] without form and void ; and the
24 heavens, and they [had] no light. I beheld the mountains, and,
25 lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and,
lo, [there was] no man, and all the birds of the heavens were
26 fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place [was] a wilderness,
and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the
LORD, [and] by his fierce anger ; *a figurative description of the*
confusion and calamities of the nation, as if the frame of nature was

* Five of their kings in succession were slain or deposed, in a few years.

27 *destroyed, and the earth reduced to its original chaos.* For thus
hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will
28 I not make a full end, *a remnant shall remain.* For this shall
the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I
have spoken [it,] I have purposed [it,] and will not re-
pent, neither will I turn back from it; *foreseeing that they
will not repent as a nation, I determined that the remnant*
29 *only shall be saved.* The whole city shall flee for the noise
of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thick-
ets, and climb up upon the rocks *to save their lives:* every
city [shall be] forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.
30 And [when] thou [art] spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though
thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee
with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with paint-
ing, *or, distendest thine eyes with paint, (some preparation used to
contract the eyelids to make the eyes look larger, as the eastern na-
tions reckon large eyes to be the most beautiful,)* in vain shalt thou
make thyself fair, *like a strumpet courting her old lovers;* [thy]
lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life; *thou shalt seek*
31 *help from thy idols and allies in vain.* For I have heard the voice
as of a woman in travail, [and] the anguish as of her that bring-
eth forth her first child, *when her pains as well as her fears are
greatest,* the voice of the daughter of Zion, [that] bewaileth
herself, [that] spreadeth her hands, [saying,] Wo [is] me now!
for my soul is wearied because of murderers; *because of the
enemy, that makes such dreadful slaughter.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us attend to the instructive views here given us of repentance and returning to God; it is *breaking up the fallow ground.* A beautiful description of a carnal heart; which is unfruitful, overrun with thorns, where no seeds of goodness will grow; and it must be broken up by repentance. This is a difficult work. It is hard to correct vicious habits; it is like ploughing ground that has long been fallow; yet it is a necessary work, if we desire to reap in mercy. Circumcise your hearts, subdue your corrupt affections, or, as it is expressed *v.* 14. more agreeably to christian language, and the ordinance of baptism, *Wash thy heart,* and be not content with external washing. It is not sufficient to regulate the life, and appear outwardly good; but we must see that the heart be cleansed by repentance and faith, and that sinful desires be suppressed for the future; because God searcheth the heart, and the wickedness that lodgeth there is an abomination to him. Let us therefore pray that God would *create in us clean hearts, and renew right spirits within us.*

2. Whoever are the instruments of our troubles, we should view them as coming from the hand of God, and that sin is the cause of them. The fierce anger of the LORD brought the Chaldeans upon Judah. They came round about her, because she had been *rebellious*

against the Lord. Thus when enemies, persecutors, and slanderers beset us, however unjust they may be, we ought to acknowledge that *the Lord is righteous.* We have done enough to justify him in any evils that he may bring upon us; and it becomes us to humble ourselves under his mighty hand.

3. The calamities of war should be deeply lamented, and we should tenderly pity those who are suffering by them. The prophet Jeremiah, though he saw the desolation of Judah only by a spirit of prophecy, and did not know whether he should actually live to behold it, yet bitterly bewails it, but more especially the sins which occasioned it. Let us bewail the desolations of war, and the long continuance of them; and earnestly pray that God would *give peace in our time.* We may also learn, from the agony which the prophet felt on this occasion, how much more deeply we ought to be affected by the prospect of that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which shall come upon the ungodly:* and, *knowing the terrors of the Lord,* let us *persuade men to be reconciled to him.*

CHAP. V.

The prophet here goes on to represent the degeneracy of the people, and the calamities which were coming upon them.

1 RUN ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be [any] that executeth judgment,
2 that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely; *though they swear by the true God, and not by idols, yet they appeal to him as*
3 *a witness of falsehood.* O LORD, [are] not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, [but] they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return; *thou knowest their true character; notwithstanding thy judgments, they were stubborn and rebellious,*
4 *and would not be reformed.* Therefore I said, Surely these [are] poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, [nor] the judgment of their God; *their ignorance is the*
5 *cause of their disobedience.* I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, [and] the judgment of their God; *I may expect better things from them, as they have enjoyed a better education and superior advantages:* but these have altogether broken the yoke,
6 [and] burst the bonds, *like headstrong oxen.* Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, [and] a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces *by a powerful, greedy, cunning enemy:* because their transgressions are many,

7 [and] their backslidings are increased. How shall I pardon thee
for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by [them
that are] no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then
committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the
harlots' houses; *and is it consistent with justice to pardon such*
8 *offenders?* They were [as] fed horses in the morning: every
one neighed after his neighbour's wife; *they abused their plen-*
9 *ty, and gratified their lusts in a most abandoned manner.* Shall
I not visit for these [things?] saith the LORD: and shall not my
soul be avenged on such a nation as this? *do they not deserve*
10 *some remarkable punishment?* Go ye up upon her walls, and de-
stroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements;
11 for they [are] not the LORD's. For the house of Israel, and
the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me,
12 saith the LORD. They have belied the LORD, and said, [It is]
not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see
sword nor famine; *he is not such a being as his prophets say he*
13 *is, he will not do as they threaten:* And the prophets shall be-
come wind, and the word [is] not in them; *they are nothing but*
noise and vanity, a parcel of silly enthusiasts: thus shall it be
done unto them; *the evils they threaten us with shall come upon*
14 *themselves.* Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Be-
cause ye speak this word, Behold, I will make my words in thy
mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them *as*
15 *certainly and speedily as the fire consumes wood.* Lo, I will bring
a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD:
it [is] a mighty nation, it [is] an ancient nation, a nation whose
language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they
say, *therefore you can neither parley with nor ask compassion from*
16 *them.* Their quiver [is] as an open sepulchre, they [are] all
mighty men; *they shall do vast execution and shall destroy mul-*
17 *titudes.* And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread,
[which] thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat
up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and
thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein
18 thou trustedst, with the sword. Nevertheless, in those days,
19 saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you.* And it
shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the
LORD our God all these [things] unto us? *why should we be*
singled out for such calamities? is it consistent with God's prom-
ises? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken
me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve
strangers in a land [that is] not yours.
20 Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah,
21 saying, Hear now this, O foolish people, and without under-
standing: which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and
hear not? *who make no use of your understanding, but are as*

* This is a remarkable prophecy, for Jeremiah could not foresee that the Jews would not be swallowed up by their conquerors, as other nations were.

22 *stupid as your idols :* Fear ye not me ? saith the LORD : will ye
not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand [for]
the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass
it : and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they
not prevail ; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it ?
a circumstance often mentioned, as a proof of God's power and do-
23 *minion.* But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart ;
24 they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart,
Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the
former and the latter, in his season ; *they are not affected by his*
goodness : he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the har-
vest ; *a proof of his providence which is obvious to the meanest*
25 *capacity.* Your iniquities have turned away these [things,] *these*
harvest blessings, and your sins have withholden good [things]
26 from you. For among my people are found wicked [men :]
they lay wait, as he that setteth snares ; they set a trap, they
catch men ; *they betray, overreach, and make a prey of one an-*
27 *other.* As a cage is full of birds, so [are] their houses full of
goods gotten by deceit : therefore they are become great, and
28 waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine : yea, they over-
pass the deeds of the wicked, *the common instances of injustice*
and oppression : they judge not the cause, the cause of the
fatherless, yet they prosper ; and the right of the needy do they
29 not judge. Shall I not visit for these [things ?] saith the
LORD : shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ?
30 A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land ;
31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their
means ; and my people love [to have it] so ; and what will ye
do in the end thereof ? *what can these things come to but the*
ruin of you all ?

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see the design of God in afflictions. He strikes men that they may see their sin, be humble and grieved for it. He consumes their substance or health, that they may receive correction with the temper of children ; accommodate themselves to it and be better for it ; he designs to bring them back to himself. This shows his justice, wisdom, and goodness in afflictions, that they are to answer so important an end ; and how displeasing to him impatience, pride, and obstinacy must be.

2. We see the advantages of being placed in the middle circumstances of life. Jeremiah in his day, and we in ours, find the poor ignorant and brutish ; many of them destitute of the means of instruction ; others of them, for want of education, know not how to use and improve them. The rich, though they have enjoyed superior advantages, are generally haughty, insolent, and obstinate ; will walk in the way of their hearts and after the fashions of the world, be they right or wrong. It is a happiness to be free from

the temptations of poverty and riches, and to be placed in that middle state of life, which is best both for this world and another.

3. We here see the cause why many persist in their iniquities, notwithstanding the warnings of God's word. It is because they do not believe them; they belie the Lord; think he is not so holy and just a Being, nor will be so strict in his judgments, as his word declares. They despise the warnings of ministers; thinking them to be words of course; and that they talk so, because it is their trade: they will not own any thing to be the word of God, but what they like: but all his words will prove true, and be too hard for them; and the judgments they despise or disbelieve will devour them.

4. The power and goodness of God in the course of his providence, is a motive to fear and reverence him. He keeps the sea within its bounds amidst the most violent tempests; stops its course by the smallest sand, as easily as by walls of rock. When the tide has risen to such a height, it returns back, as if it obeyed the divine command. Who would not tremble at the presence of so great and awful a Being! Shall we not fear him *who also gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons?* who favours us every year with seed time and harvest? Let us meditate on his power, his goodness, and universal providence, that we may adore, reverence, and serve him, who is *mighty in power, excellent in working,* and *who fills the whole earth with his goodness.*

5. It would be happy for men if they would but consider what will be the end of things. It is of the last importance, both for this world and another, to consider before we undertake any thing, what the end will be. It would especially prevent many of the calamities, and most of the iniquities that prevail among men; but they please themselves with their own imaginations, follow the course of this world, and seldom or never think *what they shall do in the end thereof.* There will be an end; death is the end of all men, as to this world; after that, the judgment will settle their everlasting state; and their end will be happy or miserable as their lives have been good or bad. *Oh that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.*

CHAP. VI.

In which the same subject is continued.

1 O YE children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem,* and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire, *that is, a beacon,* in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.
2 I have likened the daughter of Zion, *Jerusalem,* to a comely and
3 delicate [woman.] The shepherds with their flocks shall come

* Part of Jerusalem was in the tribe of Benjamin; this was the prophet's own tribe, and therefore he was greatly concerned about them.

unto her; they shall pitch [their] tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place, *in his pasture or quarter, till they quite devour it; the Chaldeans shall encourage*
4 *one another, to attack Jerusalem, saying,* Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon, *in the heat of the day.* Wo unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out; *lamenting to lose a single day in the attack;*
5 *yea they shall be so eager as to add,* Arise, and let us go by night,
6 and let us destroy her palaces. For thus hath the LORD of hosts said, *this is his commission to the Chaldeans,* Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this [is] the city to
7 be visited; she [is] wholly oppression in the midst of her. As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness, *abundantly and constantly:* violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually [is] grief and wounds, *the wounds*
8 *of those whom she hath oppressed.* Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited; *take warning before these threatenings and judgments are begun.*
9 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grape gatherer into the baskets, *when he espies more bunches; so will*
10 *God make an entire riddance.* To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear [is] uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; *it is grown heavy, and indisposed to hear the truth:* behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it; *they hate it, and charge*
11 *the prophets with being slanderers.* Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in; *I must denounce his judgments:* I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together, *when at their clubs and merry meetings:* for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with [him that is] full of days.
12 And their houses shall be turned unto others, [with their] fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the
13 inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one [is] given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, *all the different orders of men that should have promoted religion,* every
14 one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt [of the daughter] of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when [there is] no peace; *instead of searching the wound to the bottom, they have skinned it over, so that it will break out again.*
15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time [that] I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.
16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way, *in which your pious fathers, the patriarchs and prophets trod,* and walk therein, and ye

shall find rest to your souls. But they said, We will not walk
17 [therein.] Also I set watchmen over you, *to warn you of danger, and to threaten my judgments*, [saying,] Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.
18 Therefore hear, ye *neighbouring* nations, and know, O congregation, *especially ye governors and magistrates*, what [is] among
19 them, *what a height of wickedness they are grown to.* Hear, O earth; behold, I will bring evil upon this people, [even] the fruit of their thoughts, *that is, their evil thoughts and the things they fear*, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor
20 to my law, but rejected it. To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country, *on which you ground your pretensions to my favour?* your burnt offerings [are] not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto
21 me. Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, and the father and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish; *their designs shall miscarry, they shall fall into the evils they thought to avoid; neither the father's wisdom nor the son's*
22 *strength, shall deliver them.* Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall
23 be raised from the sides of the earth. They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they [are] cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in
24 array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion. We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, [and] pain, as of a woman in travail; *the*
25 *people are terribly alarmed at the report, and say*, Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way: for the sword of the ene-
26 my [and] fear [is] on every side. O daughter of my people, gird [thee] with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, [as for] an only son, most bitter lamentation:
27 for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us. I have set thee, *O Jeremiah*, [for,] *or rather in*, a tower [and] a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way, *to observe*
28 *their conduct, to see my justice, and warn them.* They [are] all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: [they are] brass and iron, *the meanest metals*; they [are] all corrupters, *imprudent and obstinate, are corrupt themselves, and corrupting one another.*
29 The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away.*
30 Reprobate silver shall [men] call them, *that is, silver mixed with dross, that will not pass current*, because the LORD hath rejected them; *they shall be rejected of God and man, and left to be consumed in the furnace.*

* Here is an allusion to the method of refining silver; lead was mixed with it for that purpose; the bellows were burned by being long near the fire; so long God had used methods to reform them; but their wickedness was not removed, nor were they the better for the means of reformation.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may infer from hence how resolute we should be *in* our spiritual warfare. The Chaldeans were eager to go up to the attack; neither the heat of the day, nor the coldness of the night discouraged them. Let the courage and patience of military men rouse us to *fight the good fight of faith.* It is a glorious warfare in which we are engaged *against spiritual enemies.* The commission and command are from God; we have the promise of his strength, if we go on vigorously and faint not. Let Christ's aged soldiers not be disheartened, but be so much the more diligent, as the day goeth away, and the shadows of the evening are lengthened, for a glorious reward will be given: *let us therefore be faithful unto death, and God will give us a crown of life.*

2. We see what is necessary to be done, if we desire the continuance of God's favour, *v.* 8. We must attend to religious instructions, by whom and in what way soever delivered; consider their importance, and obey them; else God's soul will depart from us; we shall lose his favour, and every thing honourable and comfortable; and then we shall become desolate indeed. Let us therefore *hear instruction, and be wise,* before it is too late.

3, We have here a lesson of important instruction for ministers. They must faithfully deliver even those warnings and threatenings of scripture, which are most terrifying and disagreeable to men; and which is not very pleasant to themselves to deliver, any farther than as they are needful and useful. They must beware, lest, as in *v.* 14. *they encourage men in their sins,* and suffer them to perish through self deceit. Let their hearers also beware *lest they account the word of the Lord a reproach,* and are angry with a reproof that reaches their cases and consciences. Rather let them be thankful for it, and *esteem the faithful reprover in love.*

4. How desirable is it for all, especially young persons, to *seek after and walk in the good way, the old path;* like travellers that would not willingly mistake their road, but want and ask direction. Let them inquire in what way those have walked, whose names are recorded with honour in scripture; ask of their parents, their ministers, their bible and practical books, *what is the good way,* and never turn aside from it. There, and there only, will be found rest for their souls, present peace, and everlasting happiness.

5. How miserable is the state of those who continue unreformed under the means of grace! God tries them by various methods, by conscience, his providence, his word and ordinances, as metals are tried, in order to separate the dross, to refine and purify them. His ministers take pains to study, to make known and to enforce the will of God; but, alas! seldom is any good effect of their pains seen. Their bellows are burned, their time is lost, their strength and health impaired, and their lives shortened. But they that will not be reformed, shall be utterly consumed: the Lord will reject

them, and then who can save them ? who will have pity on them ? Let us pray that we may be refined by the means of grace, as silver is refined ; and be purified as gold ; then shall we be vessels of honour, and our faithful ministers will *rejoice in the day of Christ, that they have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.*

CHAP. VII.

Here begins another section of the prophecy, ending at the tenth chapter : it opens with exhortations to amendment of life, without which their confidence in the temple is declared to be in vain.

1 THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
2 Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, *(probably at some grand festival)* and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all [ye of] Judah, that enter in at these
3 gates to worship the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place, *or else I will give it to strangers*
4 *and idolaters.* Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the
5 LORD, [are] these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings ; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a
6 man and his neighbour ; [If] ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this
7 place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt : Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.
8 Behold, ye trust in lying words that cannot profit, *that is, in*
9 *false prophets.* Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after
10 other gods whom ye know not ; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, *and pretend to worship me,* and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations ? *will ye abuse my mercy and the deliverances granted you, as if I designed them as an encouragement to you to go on in your*
11 *sins ?* Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes ? Behold, even I have seen [it,] saith the
12 LORD, *though you think I did not.* But go ye now unto my place which [was] in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, *the place where the ark was settled at your first entrance into Canaan,* and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel ; *probably the city was destroyed, as we never read of it afterwards.*
13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye
14 heard not ; and I called you, but ye answered not ; Therefore will I do unto [this] house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your

15 fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of
my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, [even] the whole
16 seed of Ephraim. Therefore pray not thou for this people,
neither lift up cry nor prayer for them; neither make inter-
cession to me: for I will not hear thee.*
17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the
18 streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fa-
thers kindle the fire, and the women knead [their] dough, to
make cakes to the queen of heaven, *the new moon*, and to pour
out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me
to anger; *all hands are employed as if they had their meat and*
19 *drink from them.* Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD;
can they hurt me by their wickedness? [do they] not [provoke]
20 themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus
saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be
poured out upon this place, upon man and upon beast, and upon
the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it
21 shall burn, and shall not be quenched. Thus saith the LORD of
hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your
sacrifices, and eat flesh; *though the burnt offerings should be en-*
tirely consumed, and only the fat of the peace offering, you may
either burn them all, or eat them all, it is the same thing to me while
you go on thus to do wickedly; or rather, Ye have added your
burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat flesh, which I said nothing
22 *of to your fathers.* For I spake not unto your fathers, nor com-
manded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of
23 Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:† But this thing
commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your
God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways
24 that I have commanded you that it may be well unto you. But
they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the
counsels [and] in the imagination of their evil heart, and went
25 backward *like headstrong oxen*, and not forward. Since the day
that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this
day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets,
26 daily rising up early, and sending [them:] Yet they hearkened
not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck:
they did worse than their fathers; *set up idols in the temple and*
27 *took no warning.* Therefore thou shalt speak all these words
unto them; but they will not hearken to thee; thou shalt also
28 call upon them; but they will not answer thee. But thou shalt
say unto them, This [is] a nation that obeyeth not the voice of
the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth *toward*
God and man is perished, and is cut off from their mouth; *there*
is no depending on any thing they say.

* God foresaw that there would not be a universal reformation, which was the only thing that could prevent their captivity; therefore he commands the prophet not to pray for them.

† As God really commanded these when they came out of Egypt, the meaning must be, that he had a greater regard to obedience than to burnt offerings, and to mercy than sacrifices. Or, that ceremonial observances were no further acceptable, than as they were the genuine fruits of obedience.

29 Cut off thine hair, [O Jerusalem,] and cast [it] away, *in token of sorrow*, and take up a lamentation on high places, *a solemn public lamentation;* for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the
30 generation of his wrath, *that used to be the generation of his love.* For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is
31 called by my name to pollute it; *which was actually done in Manasseh's time.* And they have built the high places of Tophet, which [is] in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, *wicked rites which they have learned of the Canaanites,** which I commanded [them] not, neither came it into my heart.
32 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter: for they shall bury *those that shall be slain by the Chaldeans* in Tophet, till there be no
33 place. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none
34 shall fray [them] away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate; *there shall be no encouragement to marry when they have nothing but desolation and ruin before their eyes.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE learn hence, that there are many who are very zealous for the forms of godliness, yet have nothing of the power of it. This wicked people made a great ado about *the temple of the Lord.* It was the cry of the times; as many in the christian world have said, *The church, the church;* while by their sins they have been pulling it down; zealous for forms and rites, while the church has been made a den of robbers, and their hearts have been full of all wickedness. God sees this hypocrisy, and cannot be deceived by it. Let us take heed that we do not deceive ourselves.

2. Observe the gracious regard which God has to the prayer of his servants. When he was determined to root out this wicked people, he commands his prophet not to pray for them. He knew his affection and zeal for the people, and that he would pray, while there was any hope. But God esteemed the praying breath of his servant too precious to be spent in vain. This is an encouragement to pray for our country, while we have reason to hope for success; and it contains an awful admonition, that they who will not be reformed by the preaching of ministers, shall not be the better for their prayers.

* Tophet was that particular spot in the valley of Hinnom, where fires were made, into which the poor innocent victims were thrown; and is supposed to have derived its name from the drums and tabrets that were beaten in order to drown the cries of the children when they sacrificed them to Molech.

3. We here see the wisdom and necessity of obedience. The same is commanded under every dispensation, as in *v.* 23. *Walk in all the ways I have commanded you ;* and our encouragement is the same, *I will be your God, and it shall be well with you.* We must walk in all his commands, both moral and positive, if we would enjoy the privileges and happiness of his people. *Oh that there was such a heart in us, to fear God and keep his commandments, that it might be well with us for ever.*

CHAP. VIII.

The prophet here upbraids the people with their folly and obstinacy, and bewails the dreadful miseries that were coming upon them.

1 AT that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves ; *the Chaldeans shall break open their sepulchres, in hope of finding treasures, but in the rage of disappointment they shall throw about*
2 *their bones :* And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped, *but who can do nothing for them :** they shall not be gathered, nor be buried ; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.
3 And *so great shall be their misery, that* death shall be chosen rather than life, by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.
4 Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD ; Shall they fall, and not arise ? shall he turn away, and not return ? *they act different from the maxims of common prudence ; if a man fall, will he not rise, and be glad of help ? if a traveller misses*
5 *his way, will he not inquire, and be glad to be set right ?* Why [then] is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual
6 backsliding ? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, [but] they spake not aright : no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done ? *God is represented as waiting and expecting that they would say so, but* every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the
7 battle, *without considering or fearing his danger.* Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times ; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming ; *they return in the summer to their former abodes ;* but my people know not the judgment of the LORD ; *they do not observe my*

* These various expressions are used, to show how fond they were of this worship, and what regard they paid to these gods, who now cannot protect their bones.

8 *providence, nor think of returning to me.* How do ye say, We
[are] wise, and the law of the LORD [is] with us? Lo, certainly
in vain made he [it;] the pen of the scribes [is] in vain; *you*
boast of your wisdom, because possessed of my law; but, with re-
gard to you, that law was made, transcribed, and expounded in
9 *vain; you might as well have been without it.* The wise [men]
are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have re-
jected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom [is] in them?
the politicians that boast of their wisdom show egregious folly, and
suffer the consequences of their own schemes and devices, because
10 *they will not be ruled by my word.* Therefore will I give their
wives unto others, [and] their fields to them that shall inherit
[them:] for every one, from the least even unto the greatest is
given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest
11 every one dealeth falsely. For they have healed the hurt
of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace;
12 when [there is] no peace. Were they ashamed when they had
committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, nei-
ther could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them
that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down,
13 saith the LORD. I will surely consume them saith the LORD:
[there shall be] no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree,
and the leaf shall fade; and [the things that] I have given them
14 shall pass away from them. Why do we sit still? *say the peo-*
ple to one another; assemble yourselves, and let us enter into
the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our
God hath put us to silence, *hath given us no reason to complain,*
and yet no encouragement to pray, and given us water of gall, *or*
hemlock, to drink, *that is, severe and painful judgments,* because
15 we have sinned against the LORD. We looked for peace, *as the*
false prophets had said, but no good [came; and] for a time of
16 health, and behold trouble! The snorting of his horses was
heard from Dan, *from the north:* the whole land trembled at
the sound of the neighing of his strong ones, *or horses:* for
they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it;
17 the city, and those that dwell therein. For, behold, I will send
serpents, cockatrices, among you, which [will] not [be] charm-
ed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD; *though musical*
sounds may have such an influence on particular serpents as to
prevent their biting, your enemies shall not be mollified or disarmed
18 *by any means. The prophet adds in his own name,* [When] I
would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart [is] faint in
19 me; *I see much more reason to fear than to hope.* Behold the
voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them
that dwell in a far country: [Is] not the LORD in Zion? [is]
not her king in her? *their vain plea: to which God answers,*
Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven im-
20 ages, [and] with strange vanities? *The people then say,* The
harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved; *the*
time in which we expected deliverance is over, we have no help

21 *from Egypt, nor from any of our allies. The prophet adds,* For
the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black;
astonishment hath taken hold on me; *I am ghastly, as in a vio-*
22 *lent agony, like a dying man.* [Is there] no balm in Gilead? *is*
there no suitable remedy for a diseased nation? [is there] no
physician there *to apply those remedies? Yes, undoubtedly there*
is both: why then is not the health of the daughter of my people
recovered? *alas! it is their own fault, they have brought this evil*
upon themselves.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us see and lament the folly and madness of men, in neglecting to repent and return to God. What an instructive view is given of repentance, *v.* 6. Men speak aright when they talk of returning to God, and not till then. Repentance begins in considering what we have done, in comparing it with the law, and lamenting what is amiss. Men act wisely in other respects, *v.* 8. but foolishly and perversely, in religious concerns. The obedience of the birds to the instinct implanted in them, shames the stupidity of men, who will not use their understandings to judge and pursue their true interest. The reason is, they have deceived themselves, and hold fast deceit: and when ministers would undeceive them, they will not let them: they excuse their sins, and refuse to return. Let us lament that this is the case of so many, and take care that it be not our own.

2. Religious advantages will be of no avail while men continue disobedient. We may boast of having bibles and ministers, the tongues of the learned, and the pens of the scribes; but if we do not attend and consider, and govern ourselves by the divine law, of what advantage is all this? What signifies it to live in an enlightened age, and to enjoy many glorious privileges, both as protestants and Britons, while we reject the word of the Lord, and while professing to believe it we will not be ruled by it. Remember that *the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and that to depart from evil is understanding.*

3. The destruction of sinners is to be charged upon themselves. What the prophet says of a dying nation, is equally applicable to perishing souls. *v.* 22, *Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of my people recovered?* There is abundant provision for their healing, by the word and Spirit of God. Jesus is a divine, almighty physician; but men will not put themselves under his method of cure, nor follow his prescriptions. They are humoursome and wilful, nourish their disease, and imagine that it will not prove fatal. May God show us our spiritual disorders, that we may apply to Christ, the great physician: and may he bring us health and cure, and reveal to us abundance of truth and peace.

CHAP. IX.

In which the prophet still touches upon the same mournful string, lamenting the wickedness of his people, and the judgments that were coming upon them.

1 OH that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! *which I foresee will be very many; and*
2 *foretell this to excite them to lamentation.* Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, *a cave, or hut,* that I might leave my people and go from them! *having met with so much ill usage, and being so much vexed at their wickedness;* for they [be] all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.
3 And they bend their tongues [like] their bow [for] lies; *they contrive malicious lies, which are as dangerous as arrows:* but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; *they have not courage to defend an honest cause, nor even to speak the truth:* for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD; *they grow worse and worse, and their ignorance of my*
4 *holy nature and law is the source of all.* Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk
5 with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, [and] weary themselves to commit iniquity; *they have studied the art of falsehood, and take more pains to commit in-*
6 *iquity than it would require to practise truth and integrity.* Thine habitation, *O Jeremiah,* [is] in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD; *they neither mind*
7 *the prophets nor the scriptures.* Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; *I will try what afflictions will do to reform them,* for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? *after having exercised so much mercy and patience, what other method can I take, that may at least save*
8 *some?* Their tongue [is as] an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: [one] speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his
9 mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait, *or, wait for him.* Shall I not visit them for these [things?] saith the LORD: shall not my
10 soul be avenged on such a nation as this? For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness, *or, the pastures of the plain,* a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through [them;] neither can [men] hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone, *because there is no provision for them, the Chaldeans shall make the whole*
11 *country desolate.* And I will make Jerusalem heaps, [and] a den of dragons, *a species of serpents which are only found in desolate places;* and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, with-

12 out an inhabitant. Who [is] the wise man, that may understand this? and [who is he] to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth [and] is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through? *who can understand the law of God, which threatens such things, or his prophets, who foretell them? who can see the*
13 *cause of this calamity?* And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed
14 my voice, neither walked therein; But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their
15 fathers taught them: Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, [even] this peo-
16 ple, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.

17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and, *as you yourselves are not sufficiently affected,* call for the mourning women, *which are used to attend as mourners at funerals,* that they may come; and send for cunning [women,] that they may come:
18 And let them make haste and take up a wailing for us, *that their weeping may affect us,* that our eyes may run down with
19 tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters. For a voice of wailing is heard, *that is, shall be heard,* out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have for-
20 saken the land, because our dwellings have cast [us] out. Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, *who are most easily impressed with grief and fear,* and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation; *not artificial, but real lamentation; instead of bringing them up in gaiety and diversions, teach them*
21 *mourning songs, for they will have occasion to use them.* For death is come up into our windows, [and] is entered into our palaces, *neither palaces nor fortifications can defend us from destruction; it enters every place,* to cut off the children from without, [and] the young men from the streets, *in which they*
22 *can play no more by reason of the fury of the enemy.* Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvest man, and none shall gather [them;] *they shall lie unburied, and*
23 *none shall think it worth their while to gather them up.* Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise [man] glory in his wisdom, *as if he had found out a way to escape the desolation,* neither let the mighty [man] glory in his might, *as if he could resist it,* let not the rich [man] glory in his riches, *as if they would be his ransom*
24 *in that day:* But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I [am] the LORD which exercise loving kindness, *or tenderness to the penitent,* judgment *in punishing my enemies,* and righteousness, in the earth, *in fulfilling my promises and defending my people*: for in these [things]

I delight, saith the LORD; *I delight in exercising these myself, and in those who practise them.*

25 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all [them which are] circumcised with the uncircumcised, *because*
26 *they are as sinful and impure as they;* Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all [that are] in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness; *or, those that poll the corners of their hair, (referring to the Arabians, who cut off their hair before, and left it long behind, to make them look formidable)* for all [these] nations [are] uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel [are] uncircumcised in the heart; *therefore I will reckon with them all together, and they shall fare alike.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT becomes us to be tenderly affected with the calamities of our fellow creatures. The prophet here expresses himself in the most pathetic terms, in the view of those desolations which were coming upon his people. Thus should we be affected when we hear of the desolations of war; of multitudes slain in battle; though they should not be our own people, yea, though they are our enemies, for they are men. So many precious lives are lost! and so many immortal souls are gone into eternity!

2. Prevailing falsehood is a proof of national degeneracy, and a symptom of national ruin. This seems to have been the reigning vice of Israel in Jeremiah's time. He represents them as almost all treacherous and deceitful, studying falsehood, and every method to overreach and undermine one another. It is very sad with a nation when there is falsehood in judicial proceedings, in trade and commerce, and in common conversation. Too much of this character may be observed in our nation; the many shameful bankruptcies among us show it. But let us be valiant for the truth. It requires courage to defend an honest cause, when it is much run down; or to speak for a worthy character, when it is generally aspersed; and more especially when speaking truth would expose us to sufferings and reproach. Nevertheless, let truth be ever sacred with us; for God sees and abhors all deceit. When once men violate the truth, they generally proceed from evil to evil, till at length *they have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever.*

3. We learn what should be the subject of our glory and confidence. Not our wisdom, might, or riches; for they are of uncertain continuance, nor can they defend us in time of calamity, much less in the time of death. Let us glory in the knowledge of God, and trust in his perfections. He is righteous, just, and kind. He makes himself known by these attributes; he delights in the exercise of them, and in those who endeavour to resemble him. To have an acquaintance with this God, and an interest in him, will be

a support and comfort to us in every evil day; and in him we may safely confide. Let us therefore *be followers of God as dear children.*

4. Wicked christians are no better than heathen. It is really melancholy to see that Judah is put upon a level with Egypt and Edom, Ammon and Moab, as being as bad as they, and sharing in their fate. What signifies it to us to be baptized, without purity of heart and complying with the terms of the covenant? to have the sign, without the thing signified? to be christians in name, and heathens in heart and life? None will fare the better for these external advantages; nay, if they do not improve them, their punishment will be heavier than theirs who never enjoyed them. *He is not a christian who is one outwardly, and baptism is not that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a christian who is one inwardly, who is baptized of the spirit and walketh in truth.*

CHAP. X.

Some suppose that this chapter was written after the first captivity in Jehoiakim's time, when Daniel and others were carried captive, and is an address to those captives concerning the heathen among whom they were settled, v. 1—17. and that the rest of the chapter concerns those who remained in the land, and might think themselves safe.

1 HEAR ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you,
2 O house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven: for the heathen are dismayed at them; *the Chaldeans are noted astrologers, they pretend by eclipses, the conjunction of the planets, and other signs in the heavens, to foretell future events, to determine lucky and unlucky days, and the like; learn not these*
3 *things of them, nor be dismayed at them;* For the customs of the people are vain: for [one] cutteth a tree out of the forest, the
4 work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with
5 hammers, that it move not. They [are] upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, *or carried,* because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also [is it] in them to do good. *The prophet, being struck with a sense of God's infinite greatness and glory, compared with idols, turns to him, and says, in a noble apostrophe,*
6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou
7 [art] great, and thy name [is] great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain; *or rather, when he shall approach unto thee:** forasmuch as

* Dr. Blayney.

among all the wise [men] of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, [there is] none like unto thee ; *none of their wise men or*
8 *kings, whom they have deified.* But they are altogether brutish and foolish : the stock [is] a doctrine of vanities ; *or, the very wood itself being a rebuker of vanities, (that is, idolaters) and reproaching the stupidity of those who imagined that some divine*
9 *power was lodged in it.* Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workmen, *or silversmiths*, and of the hands of the founder : blue and purple [is] their clothing : they [are] all the work of cunning
10 [men.]* But the LORD [is] the true God, he [is] the living God, and an everlasting king, *the author of life and being :* at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able
11 to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, [even] they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens ; *their*
12 *idols shall perish, as the ancient idolatry has done.*† He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion ; *consequently, his wisdom and power infinitely exceed theirs.*
13 When he uttereth his voice, [there is] a multitude of waters in the heavens, *clouds and rain*, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth ; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures, *as if it was*
14 *laid up in some secret storehouses till he had occasion for it.* Every man is brutish in [his] knowledge, *or, for want of knowledge :* every founder is confounded by the graven image : for his molten image [is] falsehood, and [there is] no breath in them.
15 They [are] vanity, [and] the work of errors, *men make them and worship them, because they have wrong notions of God*, in the time of their visitation they shall perish, *their idols are not able to*
16 *help them ; they and their gods shall perish together.* The portion of Jacob, *that is, Jehovah, who hath chosen Jacob for his portion*, [is] not like them : for he [is] the former of all [things ;] and Israel [is] the rod of his inheritance ; *he divided their inheritance by a line or rod :* the LORD of hosts [is] his name.
17 Gather up they wares, *or effects*, out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress, *ye who dwell in Jerusalem and Sion, or in other strong places, and think yourselves secure ;* for thus saith the
18 LORD, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find [it so ;] *behold, I will send the king of Babylon against you, and ye shall be all destroyed or carried away at once ; ye shall surely find it as I*

* They dressed their images often in costly robes and different suits, as the lady of Loretta, who had one for every day in the year.

† This verse was not written in the Hebrew, but the Chaldee language, that the captives might tell the Chaldeans in their own language, of their faith in Jehovah, and remonstrate against the folly of idolatry. Dr. Blayney thinks this verse interrupts the course of the argument, and that probably some public teacher, during the captivity, deducing it by direct inference from the prophet's words, had it inserted in the margin, for the reasons mentioned above.

have threatened. The people are then introduced as lamenting their calamity.

19 Wo is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said,
Truly this [is] a grief, and I must bear it; *this denotes a sullen,*
20 *not a submissive silence.* My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my
cords are broken; *an allusion to their dwelling in tents:* my chil-
dren are gone forth of me, and they [are] not; *they are slain,*
dispersed, or carried captive, to return no more: [there is] none
to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.
21 For the pastors, *the princes, governors, and priests, who should*
have guided the flock, are become brutish, and have not sought
the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks
22 shall be scattered. Behold, the noise of the brute* is come, and
a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities
of Judah desolate, [and] a den of dragons.
23 O LORD, I know that the way of man [is] not in himself: [it
is] not in man that walketh to direct his steps; *as if he had said,*
It is neither in our enemy's power to oppress us, nor in our own to
24 *deliver ourselves without thy providence.* O LORD, correct me,
but with judgment, *with mercy and moderation;* not in thine an-
25 ger, lest thou bring me to nothing. *Thou wilt* Pour out thy
fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families
that call not on thy name, *but ascribe their success to their idols:*
for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed
him, and have made his habitation desolate.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE people of God have need of great caution that they do not learn the ways of sinners, when they live among them. The Israelites are exhorted not to learn the ways of the heathen. To consult astrologers, stargazers, and conjurers, is learning the ways of the heathen, and very wicked in those who profess to believe the providence of God. To be dismayed at lights in the sky, comets, eclipses, or any extraordinary appearances in the heavens, is very unbecoming those who profess to know God, and who enjoy his gospel. Let us reverence him and his providence, and guard against all superstitious observances and fears; for they are displeasing to God, as well as mischievous to ourselves.

2. Let us observe how infinitely superior the name, wisdom, and power of the Lord are to idols, *which are all vanity and a lie.* We ought to entertain the highest and most honourable thoughts of him. Let us reflect upon his infinite goodness and glory, his power over all nature, his command over all the elements, and his goodness to the whole creation. The variety of storms and changes of the weather, prove his being and providence. All the wisdom and skill of men are derived from him. Who then would not fear him, and seek his friendship. Let the people of God rejoice in him, be

* An old English word, which signifies clamour, or alarm.

fully satisfied, and think themselves happy in having him for their portion; for happy indeed is the people who have this great and glorious Being for their God.

3. We may learn what our behaviour should be under affliction, *v.* 19. It is very common to say, 'I cannot help it, and must do as well as I can;' without any regard to God and his providence. Let us own his hand in distress; resolve to bear it patiently and cheerfully, because *God does it*, and will overrule all for our good. But it is perfectly consistent with this patience, to pray that God would moderate his stroke, correct us with judgment, and in mercy; not in angry severity, *for who then could stand before him?* and especially to pray, *that he would not deal with us after our sins.*

4. We have here the character of the heathen. They are spoken of as nations; and families are represented as constituent parts of them. *The heathen know not God;* take no pains to trace and reflect upon his being and perfections. How lamentable is it, that so many who are called by the christian name, with all their advantages, are willingly ignorant of him. *They say to God, Depart from us.* There are many families in this land that *call not on his name*, do not use family prayer, have no appearance of religion in their houses, and therefore are as bad or worse than heathens. Upon such, whatever wealth and finery be in their houses, God's fury will be poured out; and well may the heads of prayerless families tremble to think of it! To avoid this dreadful fury, and secure the divine blessing, let them resolve with Joshua, that *whatever others do, they and their houses will serve the Lord.*

CHAP. XI.

In order to reclaim the people, their attention is here called to the covenant made with their fathers.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the
3 men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; And say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD of Israel; Cursed [be] the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,
4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day [that] I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, *out of their heavy afflictions*, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God: That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as [it is] this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD, *I, for my part, consent; as if he had said, Whatever they do, I will be obedient; or rather, it may express the readiness with which the people consented to the covenant at first; all that the Lord hath spoken we will do, Exodus* xix. 8. Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words

in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying,
7 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them. For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day [that] I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, [even] unto this day, rising early
8 and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, *all the threatenings denounced in it*, which I commanded
9 [them] to do; but they did [them] not. And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *to introduce idolatry and banish true religion: some steps toward a reformation were taken in Josiah's*
10 *time, but they are now relapsed into their former idolatry:* They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.
11 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though
12 they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall
13 not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For [according to] the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah, and [according to] the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to [that] shameful thing, [even] altars to burn incense
14 unto Baal. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear [them] in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble; *I am determined not to hear; I see they are incorrigible, therefore I would not have*
15 *thy prayers be lost.* What hath my beloved to do in mine house, [seeing] she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? *thy sacrifices shall not be acceptable; or rather,* '*Shall vows and holy flesh be allowed to come from thee?*'* when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest; *when thou*
16 *art malignant, shalt thou then rejoice?* The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, [and] of goodly fruit; *he expected fruit from thee, but as thou art unfruitful, therefore* with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken; *thou shalt be utterly ruined by the*
17 *Chaldeans.* For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal. *The two following verses contain an account of the prophet's own case.*
18 And the LORD hath given me knowledge [of it,] and I know [it:] then thou showedst me their doings; *the men of Anathoth (a priest's city) had carried on a design against my life, so secretly,*

* Dr. *Blayney.*

that I knew nothing of it till God was pleased to discover it to me
19 *by revelation.* But I [was] like a lamb [or] an ox [that] is
brought to the slaughter, *insensible of my danger;* and I knew
not that they had devised devices against me, [saying,] Let us
destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off
from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remem-
bered; *let us utterly destroy the prophet and his prophecy together.*
20 But O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the
reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for
unto thee have I revealed my cause; *I appeal to the righteous*
21 *God, who will punish them as the king of Israel.** Therefore
thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life,
saying, Prophesy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not
22 by our hand:† Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold,
I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword;
23 their sons and their daughters shall die by famine: And there
shall be no remnant of them; for I will bring evil upon the
men of Anathoth, [even] the year of their visitation.

REFLECTIONS.

1. FROM hence observe the necessity there is of a due attention to the words of God's covenant. In order to correct the errors and irregularities of the Jews, the prophet attempts to bring them back to the original constitution of their church and government. The great command of the covenant with them was, *to obey God's voice*, and the promise, that *he would be their God.* The same is required of us under the covenant of grace, with which God hath favoured us. It is the business of ministers often to remind their hearers of this, and to be examples of obedience; and those especially who have solemnly engaged themselves to God in covenant, and have been often warned and encouraged to continue obedient, will be notoriously guilty and ungrateful if they break it. Let us then be ever mindful of our covenant transactions; otherwise all the threatenings of the covenant will be executed upon us.

2. See the vanity of external privileges, while obedience is wanting. How just is that expostulation of God with the Jews, *v.* 15. *What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many?* and so he may address us; what have you to do to call Christ your saviour, or to boast of your relation to God and his church? What will your prayers and sacraments avail, while you defile yourselves and dishonour religion? Such sacrifices will be unacceptable; your relation to God will stand you in no stead. May we be convinced of the necessity of real purity of heart, and of obedience as its fruit, in order to render our religious services and our common actions pleasing in his sight.

* This the Jews had a right to do by their constitution, if subordinate governors did not protect them.

† They first threatened the prophet, if he continued to prophesy; but perceiving that he was not terrified by that, they formed a secret conspiracy of which they gave him no warning; but God revealed it to him.

3. Observe how easily God can disappoint the designs which are formed against his people. Jeremiah had been threatened by the men of Anathoth; but when that had no effect to silence him, they confederated against his life. Of this God informed him, and so the mischief was prevented. Had they succeeded, they would have triumphed over him as a false prophet; because, while he foretold the ruin of his country he could not foresee his own danger. God knows every design the wicked have to destroy or injure his people; and he can reveal it to them, that they may guard against it, or by his providence he can disappoint them. Let us therefore be bold and resolute in the way of our duty; leaving our lives and comforts in his hands. The way of duty is the way of safety; and *none that trust in the Lord shall be desolate.*

CHAP. XII.

The six first verses of this chapter refer to the close of the foregoing, concerning Jeremiah's danger from the men of Anathoth; the remainder relates to God's intentions of mercy toward his people, notwithstanding their desolations.

THE delay of the judgments God had threatened against his
1 *persecutors led Jeremiah to say,* Righteous [art] thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of [thy] judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? [wherefore] are all they happy that deal very treacherously? *that is, seemingly happy, as happy as earthly things can*
2 *make them:* Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; *they make some profession of religion:* thou [art] near in their mouth, *that is, of the*
3 *priests,* and far from their reins; *they are hypocrites.* But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, *seen that I am sincere,* and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, *as victims of divine justice,* and prepare them, *set*
4 *them apart,* for the day of slaughter, *or execution.* How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end; *referring to the famine in the latter end of Josiah's time, when they derided God's threatening, and said that Jeremiah should never live to see his prophecies fulfilled. The prophet is then reproved, for being discouraged and unwilling to prophesy, on account of what he had already suffered.*
5 If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and [if] in the land of peace, [wherein] thou trustedst, [they wearied thee,] then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan, *when it overflows its banks suddenly, overtakes thee unawares, driving out*

lions and wild beasts from its banks or thickets? If thou canst not bear the opposition of thy townsmen and neighbours, how wilt thou bear to stand before the king and the great men at Jerusalem,
6 *to be put into the dungeon, and otherwise ill treated?* For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude, *that is, the mob*, after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

7 I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hands of her
8 enemies. Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me; *it is very fierce in opposing me, and treating my prophets with cruelty and rage*, therefore have I hated it.
9 Mine heritage [is] unto me [as] a speckled bird, *I have given it to be fallen upon as a prey*, the birds round about [are] against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour; *because they have been full of cruelty I will bring rapacious enemies against them, that shall tear them in pieces as they have torn the servants and worshippers of God; their case shall be like that of a ravenous bird, which when wounded and disabled by fighting in the air with other birds, falls to the ground and is devoured*
10 *by wild beasts.* Many pastors, *the princes and governors of the Chaldeans*, have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a deso-
11 late wilderness. They have made it desolate, [and being] desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth [it] to heart; *it seems to complain of its ruined condition, because its inhabitants were not humbled under*
12 *God's hand.* The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the [one] end of the land even to the [other] end of the land: no
13 flesh shall have peace. They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, [but] shall not profit; and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD; *they have laboured in vain, their foreign al-*
14 *liances and idolatrous confidences shall disappoint them.* Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit, *against the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, that took possession of the land;* Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them, *that is, the Jews who were carried captive, or fled into these countries, before the general cap-*
15 *tivity.* And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land; *their captivity shall be terminated by Cyrus after se-*
16 *venty years, as the Jewish captivity was.* And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal, *if they will become proselytes to the Jewish reli-*

gion, then shall they be built in the midst of my people; *though they have defiled and corrupted them, yet they shall partake of their*
17 *privileges*. But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up, and destroy that nation, saith the LORD, *though they return, they shall soon be destroyed. Some understand it of the conversion of the heathen enemies of the Jews to christianity in the latter day.*

REFLECTIONS.

1 THE prosperity of the wicked has been a stumbling block to good men in former ages; to David and Asaph; and particularly to Jeremiah. He reasons the case with God: but very justly and piously lays it down as a first principle, that *God is righteous*. It is no uncommon thing to see the wicked prosperous, easy, and happy; even those who, with the appearance of piety, are guilty of injustice and cruelty. When we observe this, let it not move us; remembering and owning that *the Lord is righteous*, and that he has wise and holy ends in permitting it. While *clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and judgment have their habitation in his throne*. Let us endeavour to have our hearts right with him; then we may be sure that every thing will go right with us, and *all things work together for our good*.

2. Instead of sinking under present troubles, it is good to expect and prepare for future and greater. Such we must expect; and it is needful to habituate our minds to patience and submission. Let us not raise our expectations too high from any thing to be enjoyed upon earth; but remember that this is a state of trouble, because a state of trial; that changes and death are before us; and that future afflictions will be lighter in proportion to the pains we take, under present evils, to possess our souls in patience.

3. See what is necessary in order to our being owned as God's people, viz. that we *diligently learn their ways*; the ways of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. These are to be learned by observing their walk, especially by studying the word of God: and this requires great diligence, because it is a way contrary to the bent of corrupt nature and the course of this world. Let it be our care to walk in the way of good men: then shall we be built up in holiness and comfort with them, and at length share their everlasting joys.

CHAP. XIII.

This chapter contains an entire prophecy. Under the symbol of a linen girdle, left to rot near Euphrates, it foretells the manner in which the glory of the Jews shall be marred during their long captivity in Chaldea.

1 THUS saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen
girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water;
do not wash it, let it be soiled; to intimate how the Jews had de-
2 *filed themselves.* So I got a girdle according to the word of the
3 LORD, and put [it] on my loins. And the word of the LORD
4 came unto me the second time, saying, Take the girdle that
thou hast got, which [is] upon thy loins, and arise, go to Eu-
5 phrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. So I went, and
6 hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me. And it
came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me,
Arise, go to Euphrates and take the girdle from thence, which
7 I commanded thee to hide there. Then I went to Euphrates,
and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it:
and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.
All this was transacted in a vision, the more strongly to impress
8 *the mind of the prophet and the people.* Then the word of the
9 LORD came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, After this
manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of
Jerusalem: *they shall be carried captive beyond Euphrates, and*
all their finery shall be defaced; thus will I bring down the pride
10 *of the countrymen and the citizens.* This evil people, which re-
fuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their
heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship
them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.
11 For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I
caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole
house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me
for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory:
but they would not hear; *they have been my peculiar people, have*
entered into covenant with me; they have been honoured with my
name, and a special relation to me, that I might be glorified by their
showing forth my truth and praise to the world: but by their
wickedness they are no more a glory to me, than a rotten, dirty
girdle is to him that weareth it.
12 Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus
saith the Lord GOD of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with
wine, *(probably a common proverb)* and they shall say unto thee,
Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with
wine? *they will make a jest of it, saying, Who does not know this?*
But the prophet is ordered to give them a terrible explanation of it.
13 Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold,
I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit

upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness; *I will turn*
14 *them all to confusion, and put them to their wits end.* And I will dash them one against another *like bottles*, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.
15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud, *so as to despise what is*
16 *said to you:* for the LORD hath spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, *by confession, humiliation, and returning to him*, before he cause darkness, *that is, trouble and great affliction*, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, *when flying over the mountains by night from the sword of the Chaldeans*, and, while ye look for light, *and wish for the morning*, he turn it into
17 the shadow of death, [and] make [it] gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for [your] pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock is carried away captive, *for that will be*
18 *the end of your pride and obstinacy.* Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down *as mourners:* for your principalities shall come down, [even] the crown of your glory; *or, he will cause to fall from your heads the diadem of your glory: probably referring to Jehoiakim and his mother, (2 Kings* xxiv.
19 12.) *who were carried captive by the king of Babylon.* The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open [them:] Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive; *all the cities shall be besieged or forsaken.*
20 Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north, *that is, the Chaldeans, (this is addressed to the king and governors:)* where [is] the flock [that] was given thee *to take care of*, thy beautiful flock, *which thou hast neglected? what is become*
21 *of them? to what state are they reduced?* What wilt thou say when he, *that is, God*, shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them [to be] captains, [and] as chief over thee; *thy regard to thy neighbours, shall be thy ruin:* shall not sorrows take thee, as
22 a woman in travail? And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, [and] thy heels made bare; *for this thou art carried away captive, stripped of thy upper garments,*
23 *and barefoot.* Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? [then] may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil; *so accustomed to it that it is almost impossible to reclaim*
24 *you, there is no prospect of it.* Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.
25 This [is] thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood; *in allies that deceived thee, and disappointed thy presump-*
26 *tuous hopes.* Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear; *an allusion to the way of punishing*
27 *lewd women, by publicly exposing them.* I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, [and]

thine abominations on the hills in the fields ; *I have seen thy idolatry, which is spiritual lewdness.* Wo unto thee, O Jerusalem ! wilt thou not be made clean ? when [shall it] once [be ?] *I will yet wait a while to see what effect these threatenings and expostulations will have upon thee.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see how much God is displeased with pride, whatever it be that we are proud of : and especially with those who think themselves too wise and good to be taught. God takes notice of the degrees of pride in the heart, though it do not appear to men. He observes the pride of the countrymen, and the greater pride of the citizens. Those who live in populous, wealthy places, are more apt to be proud of their fine houses, furniture, and entertainments, than those who live in the country. But it is a sin that easily besets all ; and is particularly abominable in God's professing people. He has many ways of marring it and bringing it down. Let us therefore examine our own hearts, guard against self conceit, and earnestly pray that we may be clothed with humility.

2. The prospect of approaching evils should lead us to humiliation and amendment of what is amiss, *v.* 16. Pride makes men secure and confident ; but darkness is before them. Our afflictions, disappointments, and days of darkness may be many ; at least death is before us ; and on these dark mountains our feet may stumble. To prevent this, let us give glory to God by confession and reformation, and living near to him. It becomes the greatest persons to do this, even kings and queens ; else all their glory and lustre will end in everlasting darkness ; while the humble and pious shall be exalted, and partake of the inheritance of the saints in light.

3. How tenderly ought God's people, and especially his ministers, to be affected with the obstinacy and impenitence of others, *v.* 17. It should grieve us to behold transgressors, especially those who have enjoyed many and great religious advantages. Ministers, when they see their labours unsuccessful, often weep in secret, and pour out their prayers and tears to God on this account. But God bottles their tears ; and wo be to those whose pride and obstinacy have occasioned them.

4. Let our minds be impressed with the great difficulty of conquering bad habits. It is a thing next to impossible. Hardly any principles of religion, any motives, either of fear or shame, will work upon those who are accustomed to do evil. Fact and experience prove this. Let us be thankful if through the pious care of parents, and divine grace, we have never contracted them. Young people should above all things guard against them ; and parents watch over their children to prevent them. Nothing is impossible to divine grace and power. Let those therefore who are under the power of them, earnestly strive and pray against them, and do it without delay, lest the disease should become incurable.

CHAP. XIV.

This chapter foretells a drought, which would greatly distress Judea; the prophet makes confession and supplication for pardon; God declares his purpose to punish; and the prophet bewails their misery.

1 THE word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning
2 the dearth, *the scarcity occasioned by want of rain.* Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish, *that is, the cities and their inhabitants;* they are black unto the ground; *they look black and ghastly, and throw themselves on the ground in grief and despair;* and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up, *even the capital*
3 *city groans under it.* And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters, *being forced to part with their servants, they send their children for water:* they came to the pits, [and] found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were
4 ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the
5 ploughmen were ashamed, they covered their heads. Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook [it,] because there was
6 no grass *for herself to eat, that she might nourish her young.* And the wild asses did stand in the high places *for air to cool them,* they snuffed up the wind like dragons, *or, like crocodiles, who frequently put up their heads above the water to breathe;* their eyes did fail, *they looked till they were weary with looking,* because [there was] no grass.

7 O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou [it] for thy name's sake, *interpose for us:* for, *or rather, though* our
8 backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee. O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man, [that] turneth aside to tarry for a night? *thou hast promised to dwell with us: and dost thou regard us no more than a traveller doth a place in which he lodges for a night, and never expects to see it*
9 *any more?* Why shouldst thou be as a man astonied *through fear and surprise,* as a mighty man [that] cannot save, *who hath lost his wisdom and strength?* yet thou, O LORD, [art] in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not. *To which God replies;*

10 Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet *from evil ways,* therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remem-
11 ber their iniquity, and visit their sins. Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for [their] good; *do not expect*
12 *that your intercessions will prevail.* When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them; *though they offer whole burnt offerings, and bread offerings, (which were then peculiarly valuable) yet I will not hear:* but I will consume them by the sword, and

by the famine, and by the pestilence; *the pestilence and the sword shall be added to the famine already among them.*

13 Then said I, *as some excuse for them,* Ah, Lord GOD, behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this
14 place. Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of
15 their heart. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed, *which, though they call themselves prophets, they cannot see to be coming upon*
16 *themselves.* And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them; them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

17 Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease; *God commands me to lament your calamities:* for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a
18 very grievous blow.* If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine! yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not; *the false*
19 *prophets and wicked priests shall be carried captive.* Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and [there is] no healing for us? we looked for peace, and [there is] no good: and for the time of healing,
20 and behold trouble! We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, [and] the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned
21 against thee; *we plead guilty. Nevertheless,* Do not abhor [us,] for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory, *thy temple:* remember, break not thy covenant with us; *do not*
22 *annul or cut off our relation to thee.* Are there [any] among the vanities of the gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? *idols or second causes cannot relieve us; but* [art] not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these [things.]

REFLECTIONS.

1. WANT of rain in its season, is a great judgment, with which our hearts ought to be deeply affected. God commands the prophet to lament it. Let us own the hand of God whenever we see or feel any degree of it. It is he who *maketh the*

* Jerusalem is called a virgin daughter, or city, because it had never been burned or destroyed.

heavens as iron, the earth as brass, and the rain of our land powder and dust ; and it becomes us to humble ourselves before him under such visitations. More especially as,

2. Sin is the cause of this and every other judgment. We should not rest in natural causes, but under public calamity acknowledge, with the prophet here, that *our sins testify against us*, that we have deserved it, and that *the Lord is righteous* in inflicting it : that *we have wandered from God, and not refrained our feet from evil ways*, though we have often been warned of the consequences. Let us then, as *v.* 20. *acknowledge our wickedness* with penitent hearts, and cherish godly sorrow for our sins.

3. In seasons of national distress let us earnestly apply to God for relief. The vanities of the gentiles cannot help us ; it will be of no avail to pray to idol gods. Let us fly to him, *as the hope of Israel and the saviour*, and supplicate his mercy for his name's sake ; that he may be glorified by our thankful improvement of the favour we seek : and let us to our prayers join our ardent praises, that our case is not so bad as that of Judah ; that we do not see in our towns those who are sick with famine, and in our fields those who are slain with the sword. Thus let us *wait upon God*, for he hath made and ordered all these things.

4. How much more earnestly should we pray for a plentiful communication of his Spirit ! Rain from heaven and fruitful seasons are very desirable ; but it is more desirable that religion should flourish, and the fruits of righteousness abound : and this can only be expected from God's pouring out his Spirit. We very much need it ; there is a spiritual dearth in our churches ; *the things that remain are ready to die ;* and the graces of professors languish. Let us daily pray that God would not reject and leave us ; but send down showers of this blessing ; that we may *abound in all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.*

CHAP. XV.

In reply to their request in the former chapter, God assures them in this that nothing could divert him from his purpose of punishing so wicked a people. Accordingly their fate is again declared ; the prophet complains of being obliged to deliver such messages ; he is reproved for this ; appeals to God for his sincerity, and supplicates pardon ; upon which God promises to protect him in the faithful discharge of his duty.

1 THEN said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, *those successful intercessors for Israel*, [yet] my mind [could] not [be] toward this people : cast [them]
2 out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth ? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD, Such as [are] for

death, to death, *that is, to the pestilence ;* and such as [are] for the sword, to the sword ; and such as [are] for the famine, to the famine ; and such as [are] for the captivity, to the captivity.
3 And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD : the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy *those that are*
4 *slain.* And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for [that] which he did in Jerusalem, *for complying with and persisting in his idolatries, for suppressing the worship of Jeho-*
5 *vah, and putting up idols even in the temple.* For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem ? or who shall bemoan thee ? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest ? *none shall think it worth his while to do so, every one must own thy calamity to be*
6 *just.* Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward : therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee ; I am weary with repenting ; *with suspending*
7 *my judgments and bearing so long with thee.* And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land ; I will bereave [them] of children, I will destroy my people, [since] they return not from
8 their ways. Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas : I have brought upon them, *that is, Jerusalem,* against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noon day ; *or, against the mother city a young man, namely, Nebuchadnezzar, who was a young man, in the first year of his reign :* I have caused
9 [him] to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city. She that hath borne seven languisheth : she hath given up the ghost ; her sun is gone down while [it was] yet day : she hath been ashamed and confounded, *because she hath lost all her children, at a time when she enjoyed most comfort in them ; or this may be understood of Jerusalem :* and the residue of them, *those that have escaped out of the city,* will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD. *The prophet then proceeds.*
10 Wo is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me, a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth, *or land ! every one hates me and quarrels with me for my faithfulness :* I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury ; [yet] every one of them doth curse me ; *I have had no dealings in the world, which are often the source of contention ; particularly those dealings here mentioned, which generally produced quarrels, as the*
11 *Jews were forbidden to lend to one another on usury.* The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant,* *in the residue of thy days and thy family ;* verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee [well] in the time of evil and in the time of affliction ; *which they did, giving him leave to stay or go, as he pleased.*
12 Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel ? *a proverbial expression, signifying, that the northern nations, who should come*

* Dr. *Blayney* translates it, *They have reviled me all of them, saith Jehovah,* that is, *both thou and the people, ye. I will take care of thee.*

up against Jerusalem, would be as much superior to them in
13 *strength, as tempered steel is to common iron.* Thy substance
and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price, *without*
any valuable consideration, as a worthless commodity, which a man
will give away rather than keep, and [that] for all thy sins, even
14 in all thy borders. And I will make [thee] to pass with thine
enemies into a land [which] thou knowest not; for a fire is
kindled in mine anger, [which] shall burn upon you. *The*
prophet then says,
15 O LORD, thou knowest *my innocence:* remember me, and
visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors: take me not away
in thy long suffering; *permit me not to be destroyed by them,*
while thou art long suffering and bearest with their provocations:
16 know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Thy words were
found, and I did eat them; and thy word, *or commission,* was
unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called
by thy name, O Lord GOD of hosts; *I received thy messages with*
pleasure, and meditated upon them, and delivered them readily and
justly; but as they were principally of the terrible kind, I began to
17 *be uneasy at them.* I sat not in the assembly of the mockers,
nor rejoiced, *indulged no unbecoming levity;* I sat alone, *or re-*
tired, because of thy hand; *on account of the judgments thou hast*
threatened to bring upon them: for thou hast filled me with in-
dignation; *I had no heart to be cheerful when I had nothing but*
18 *woes to foretell.* Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound
incurable, [which] refuseth to be healed? *must I always con-*
tinue in this uneasy condition? wilt thou be altogether unto me
as a liar, [and as] waters [that] fail *and grow dry in summer?*
must I always be disappointed in my hope of encouragement, and of
success in my work? These were the irregular workings of the
prophet's mind; to which God answers,
19 Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return *to a better tem-*
per and a faithful discharge of thy duty, then will I bring thee
again [and] thou shalt stand before me; *I will restore thee to*
thy station, as my prophet: and if thou take forth the precious
from the vile thou shalt be as my mouth; *if thou distinguish*
between good and bad in thy preaching, I will honour thee with
further messages, and enable thee to deliver them aright: let
them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them; *do not*
accommodate thyself to their lusts and prejudices, but deliver my
20 *word faithfully, how much soever it is disrelished.* And I will
make thee unto, *or against,* this people a fenced brazen wall;
and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail
against thee: for I [am] with thee to save thee and to deliver
21 thee, saith the LORD. And I will deliver thee out of the hand
of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the
terrible.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us attentively observe what an honour God here puts upon his praying servants; with what respect and affection he speaks of Moses and Samuel, who had been dead many centuries. If any thing would have reconciled him to Israel, it would have been their intercession. This is no intimation that they interceded in heaven, but the contrary: it is only a supposition; as Moses had often stood in the breach, and Samuel prevailed for their deliverance. This shows the power of prayer, and what pleasure God takes in his worshipping servants. It shows what a blessing to their country those are, who offer up earnest prayers for it: and how desirable and necessary it is that we should abound in supplication for our own land.

2. See how difficult it is to bear censure and reproach with patience and cheerfulness. Jeremiah was much out of frame, through the strife and contention of his countrymen; and it is indeed hard to live peaceably and keep our tempers, when we live among bad neighbours, who are disposed to pick quarrels and spread slanders. Those who have large dealings in the world are very likely to suffer in their character, and consequenfly in their temper; but let them take warning by the prophet, and be so much the more upon their guard that they do not indulge a fretful, uneasy spirit; and endeavour, by watchfulness and prayer, *in patience to possess their souls:* and, when discomposed, to return to a right mind.

3. See what opposition faithful ministers have reason to expect. Jeremiah had pursued no secular business, which is often the source of envy and contention; he acted in his own sphere, and delivered his messages faithfully; and merely on this account these wicked men hated and persecuted, and did all they could to silence him as a troublesome man. Let none of God's faithful servants, particularly his ministers, wonder, if they are put under an ill name; and if they who are reproved, and will not be reformnd, censure and abuse their best friends, and quarrel with those who would save them from destruction.

4. See how ministers ought to behave themselves in such circumstances. They are to meditate on the word of God; digest it, and endeavour throughly to understand and relish it. They are not to study to please men by sinful compliances, and by bringing down christian precepts to their standard; but to deliver their messages faithfully, and urge men to come up to the purity of the christian standard. They are to distinguish between the precious and the vile; to reprove the wicked and the careless; to encourage and comfort the righteous. They are to consider themselves as God's mouth; to speak nothing but what his word requires; and when they do so we are to consider them as God's mouth, and pay as much regard to what they say, as if God himself spoke to us. These are maxims necessary to be regarded by us at all times; especially amidst prevailing degeneracy; and in so doing God will support and deliver us; and we shall stand before him with honour and acceptance through Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XVI.

In which the prophet foretells the utter ruin of the Jews.

1 THE word of the LORD came also unto me, saying, *while*
2 *others go on in their usual course*, Thou shalt not take thee
a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place;
3 *a token of the desolation that is speedily approaching.* For thus
saith the LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters [that are] born in this place, and concerning their mothers
that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in
this land; *such calamities are coming, that it would have been*
4 *better they had lived single; for* They shall die of grievous
deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; [but] they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth:
and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and
their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the
5 beasts of the earth. For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into
the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them:
for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD,
[even] loving kindness and mercies; *their own miseries are so*
great that they cannot sympathize with others; they are not ob-
6 *jects of my mercy, nor of the compassion of others.* Both the
great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be
buried, neither shall [men] lament for them, nor cut themselves,
nor make themselves bald for them, *that is, shall not shave the*
tops of their heads, they shall be treated like common malefactors:
7 Neither shall [men] tear [themselves] for them, *or break bread*
for them, in mourning to comfort them for the dead; neither
shall [men] give them the cup of consolation to drink for their
8 father or for their mother.* Thou shalt not also go into the
house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink; *thou*
shalt not use even innocent entertainments, but, by abstaining from
9 *them, declare that all festivity shall cease.* For thus saith the
LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease
out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of
mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom,
and the voice of the bride, *all public and private occasions of*
rejoicing.
10 And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt show this people
all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath
the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what
[is] our iniquity? or what [is] our sin that we have committed
11 against the LORD our God? Then shalt thou say unto them,
Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and
have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have
worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my

* It was the custom in those days to send food and wine to mourners, as supposing they had no heart to provide for themselves; this was very different from making feasts for them, which is a ridiculous and indecent custom, sometimes practised among us.

12 law; And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold,
ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that
they may not hearken unto me; *they have cherished and encour-*
13 *aged those lusts which lead them from God:* Therefore will I cast
you out of this land into a land that ye know not, [neither] ye
nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and
night; where I will not show you favour; *ye shall be tempted*
to do it, and some shall comply; but they shall not gain the favour
of the Chaldeans thereby; accordingly those were most esteemed
who had the courage to oppose these things. Then follows the
promise of mercy in the midst of judgment.
14 Therefore, *or nevertheless*, behold, the days come, saith the
LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that
15 brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But,
the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from
the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had
driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I
gave unto their fathers; *though this deliverance be not so great*
and miraculous as the other, yet they shall be more impressed with
it, as brought about by the immediate influence of God upon Cy-
rus. But at present,
16 Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they
shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they
shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and
17 out of the holes of the rocks. For mine eyes [are] upon all
their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their ini-
quity hid from mine eyes; *I will send armies against you, which*
you shall be no more able to resist, than fishes and beasts can re-
18 *sist fishers and hunters.* And first, *before that happy time comes,*
I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double, *that is,*
largely, or double to my usual severity; because they have defil-
ed my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses
of their detestable and abominable things, *with wounded beasts*
offered to heathen deities, such as swine and mice; perhaps hu-
man sacrifices may be referred to. Then, in order to aggravate
the stupidity of Israel, the prophet reflects with pleasure on the
19 *time when the heathen shall be converted;* O LORD, my strength,
and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the
gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and
shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and
[things] wherein [there is] no profit; *they shall be ashamed of*
the gods of their fathers, turn to Jehovah, and be obedient to him.
20 Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they [are] no gods?
21 *what can be more absurd than this?* Therefore, behold, I will
this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine
hand and my might, *in bringing them back and thereby awakening*
the heathen; and they shall know that my name [is] The LORD;
the effect of their captivity shall be to cure them of their idolatry.
Accordingly they have never since relapsed into it.

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW wretched is the case of those from whom God takes away his peace! It is often the case of nations and of particular persons. Nations lose their prosperity and quiet, and have little comfort in any of their enjoyments; and particular persons lose, not only external blessings, their substance, health, and friends, but the composure of their minds. Their hearts meditate terror, and that oftentimes when there is no ground for it. May we be thankful for our peace while it is continued, and be careful to *keep ourselves in the love of God*; for without that we can have no true peace. Then, though we walk for a while in darkness, light and gladness will quickly succeed.

2. Let us often reflect on God's perfect knowledge of our ways and hearts; our conduct and principles, and our iniquities, v. 17. Many forget him; their eyes are never toward the Lord; they think him such an one as themselves; but he sees all things; *our secret sins are in the light of his countenance.* All are observed and remembered by him; and *for all these things he will bring us into judgment.*

3. We are taught not to undervalue the favours and mercies shown to us, because they are not in some respects equal to those of our fathers, v. 14, 15. We see how much the Israelites were affected with their deliverances, though it was not so miraculous as the deliverance of their fathers. The former and later appearances of Providence are to be kept in remembrance, and gratefully acknowledged. Let us give God glory for the mercy shown to our fathers, for we reap the benefit of them; nor say, *the former days were better than these.* Though our deliverances and favours on some accounts are less wonderful, yet they may be equally important; and therefore God should be devoutly praised for them.

4. Let the disappointments and vexations which others have found in the ways of sin, engage us to depart from them, v. 19. We are not to do any thing because they did it, but to consider whether it be right and good. If wrong, let no veneration for antiquity and custom influence our minds, more especially in matters of evident duty. Sin is attended with sorrow, shame, and misery. Instances of this we ourselves may have seen. Let us therefore fly from it, and turn unto the Lord, for his service is reasonable. Those that wait on him shall never be ashamed; and *in keeping his commandments there is great reward.*

CHAP. XVII.

The former part of the chapter, v. 1—18, shows the fatal consequences of idolatry, the happiness of the man, that trusts in God, and the vanity of riches, which often disappoint the owner; the prophet appeals to God for his sincerity, and prays that the evil intended by his enemies may revert on their own heads; the remainder relates to the due observance of the sabbath.

1 THE sin of Judah [is] written with a pen of iron, [and] with the point of a diamond: [it is] graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars, *where the blood of their idolatrous sacrifices is poured out, which is a proof of the wickedness of their hearts, plain and legible both to God and man; they are so confirmed in sin that there is no hope of re-*
2 *claiming them;* Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills; *even their children can show the way to their altars, and understand their*
3 *worship, it is so common and prevalent.* O my mountain in the field, *that is, Jerusalem, a mountain, or a heap of mountains in a plain,* I will give thy substance [and] all thy treasures to the spoil, [and] thy high places for sin, *or, on account of thy sin,*
4 throughout all thy borders. And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not; *a very beautiful allusion to the seventh year, when the land was to lie untilled and the servants were to be released; for the neglect of this thou shalt be released from thy possession, and turned out of thy heritage*: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, [which] shall burn for ever, *that is, till you are consumed.*

5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed [be] the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh, *that is, frail, mortal man,* his arm, *or confidence,* and whose heart departeth from the LORD; *referring*
6 *to their alliance with Egypt and dependence upon it.* For he shall be like the heath in the desert, *a very worthless shrub,* and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, [in] a salt land and not inhabited; *they shall not enjoy the good and safety they hoped for, but be exposed to the*
7 *evils they feared.* Blessed [is] the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is, *who useth no sinful means*
8 *for his safety.* For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, *in opposition to the heath before mentioned,* and [that] spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see, *or fear,* when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit, *which shall not be destroyed by drought, but have a constant supply of moisture, and be always fruitful.*

9 The heart [is] deceitful above all [things,] and desperately wicked: who can know it? *A general remark; which seems principally to refer to their foreign alliances, by which they would*

10 *be deceived.* I the LORD search the heart, [I] try the reins, even
to give every man according to his ways, [and] according to the
fruit of his doings ; *I alone know the heart, and can by my provi-*
11 *idence turn and influence it.* [As] the partridge, *or kore, (a*
bird which frequents the mountains, 1 *Sam.* xxvi. 20.) sitteth [on
eggs,] and hatcheth [them] not ; *or sitteth on eggs she did not
lay, and the brood from which soon run from her and join with birds
of their own kind, or are frequently and easily destroyed ;* [so]
he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the
midst of his days, *when he thinks them secure, and promises him-
self pleasure in them,* and at his end shall be a fool, *because he has
laboured for and trusted in what is so transitory.*
12 A glorious high throne from the beginning [is] the place of
our sanctuary ; *God made it so from the beginning, that is, since
David contrived and Solomon built it ; and this is an aggravation
of our folly in forsaking the Lord and serving idols, while his tem-*
13 *ple is among us.* O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake
thee *for other confidences* shall be ashamed, [and] they that de-
part from me, *from thy words delivered by me,* shall be *like char-
acters* written in the *dust of the* earth, *which are easily blown
away,* because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of liv-
14 ing waters. *The prophet prays,* Heal me, O LORD, and I shall
be healed ; *relieve and comfort me under persecutions and afflic-
tions ;* save me, and I shall be saved : for thou [art] *the object of*
my praise.
15 Behold, they say unto me, Where [is] the word of the LORD ?
let it come now ; *infidels and libertines doubt the truth of it, and*
16 *defy its threatenings.* As for me, I have not hastened from [be-
ing] a pastor to follow thee :* neither have I desired the woful
day ; thou knowest ; *I have taken no pleasure in denouncing
these judgments, I have never wished for them, though necessary
to accomplish my prophecies ; I have kept close to my instructions :*
17 that which came out of my lips was [right] before thee. Be not
a terror unto me, *while my adversaries are so :* thou [art] my
18 hope in the day of evil. Let them be confounded, *that is, they
shall be so,* that persecute me, but let not me be confounded :
let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed : bring upon
them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction ;
*thou wilt utterly destroy them, that they may no longer insult thy
prophet and defy thy threatenings.*
19 Thus saith the LORD unto me ; Go and stand in the gate of
the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in,
and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem,
20 *in all public places ;* And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the
LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of
21 Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates : Thus saith the LORD ;
Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day,
22 nor bring [it] in by the gates of Jerusalem ; Neither carry forth a

* Some read it thus, *I have not thrust myself into the pastoral office, nor have I declined it when called to it.*

burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers;
23 *as a sign of my covenant with them.* But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might
24 not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but
25 hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for
26 ever; *the court, the city, and the country shall flourish.* And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD; *they shall bring their sacrifices from all parts*
27 *of the land.* But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched; *a threatening which was literally fulfilled, and which this very prophet lived to see and lament.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see how cautious we should be of putting too much trust in man. To depend upon human wisdom, skill, and power, to the neglect of God, (that is, while we disregard his providence, and restrain prayer before him) is an affront to him; it is impious and profane. Men are all of them weak and frail, many of them are false and deceitful; therefore it is foolish to trust in them, and the way to have our expectations disappointed. In like manner, it is also foolish to trust in our own hearts, and lean to our own understandings, without seeking and acknowledging God. *Take heed therefore, brethren, lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.*

2. We see how safely and comfortably we may trust in God. If we faithfully do our duty, and trust in him to guide, support, and deliver us, he will do it. He knows the heart; knows what we intend; and what those with whom we have any concern intend; and can influence us and them as he pleases. If we trust in him, we shall flourish in honour and comfort, and abound in the fruits of righteousness. He will not be our terror, but our comfort, in the day of evil, when men fail us, and our expectations from the creatures are disappointed.

3. We are taught the vanity of those riches which are unjustly gotten. All are vanity; but these are especially so. A man may

get rich by oppression, fraud, and artifice. This is sometimes the case; and it encourages men of no principle to practise injustice. But such riches often leave a man in the midst of his days, when he wants them most, and pleases himself with the thought of their continuance and increase. They will certainly leave him in the end of his days, when he can carry nothing with him but the guilt, shame, and remorse of having gotten them unjustly. Then he will see himself to have been a fool: however proud he may have been of his sagacity and success, and of the flattery of others. O *let integrity and uprightness preserve us*: and let us be *rich in good works*. By acting thus we shall *show ourselves wise, and lay up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come*.

4. Observe how necessary it is to *sanctify the sabbath*, if we desire the favour of God, and the prosperity of our country. This is required of kings and rulers, as well as others. No burdens are to be borne, no common work to be done, no labouring, travelling, carrying out, or fetching in, (even provisions) except in case of absolute necessity. We see what stress God lays upon this duty; he charges the neglect of it as a crime which would bring ruin upon the state. The religious observation of the sabbath will support other branches of religion, *v.* 21, therefore let us take heed to ourselves. Great caution is needful in a degenerate day, and amidst so many bad examples. Those who, merely to save time on working days, contrive to take journeys, to visit their friends, or follow their business on the sabbath, and, by so doing, deprive themselves of religious advantages, do at least, (however their thoughts may be employed) set a bad example to others, and encourage them to profane the sabbath. Those who do this should attend to the prophet Jeremiah's admonition: and how they can imagine such a conduct to be consistent with the divine authority and law, the design of the sabbath, the solemnity of a christian profession and engagement, or even with seeking the true interest of their country, is astonishing. How they will vindicate it before him, who will give to every man according to his ways and the fruit of his doings, they will do well to consider.

CHAP. XVIII.

God here, under the type of a potter, shows his absolute power in disposing of nations, and threatens judgments to Judah.

1 THE word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will
3 cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels, *or, was at*
4 *work upon the stones*. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another
5 vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make [it.] Then the

6 word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot
I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the
clay [is] in the potter's hand, so [are] ye in mine hand, O house
of Israel; *I have absolute power over thee to do as I please, yet I
am not inclined to deal with thee in strict righteousness according*
7 *to thy true character; for* [At what] instant I shall speak con-
cerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, *either by my pro-
phets, or in the course of providence,* to pluck up, and to pull
8 down, and to destroy [it;] If that nation against whom I have
pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I
thought to do unto them; *I will change my way of dealing with
9 them.* And [at what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation,
10 and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant [it;] If it do
evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of
the good wherewith I said I would benefit them; *according to
their different behaviour, they shall become the objects of my favour
or displeasure.*

11 Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the
inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold,
I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you; *I in-
tend to punish you:* return ye now every one from his evil way,
12 and make your ways and your doings good. And they said,
There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and
we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart; *they were
13 stubborn and would not be reformed.* Therefore thus saith the
LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such
things; *none among them were so stupid, as to say they would not
reform when judgments were coming upon them, especially when
they actually felt them; the Ninevites, for instance, relented at the
preaching of Jonah, but* the virgin of Israel hath done a very hor-
rible thing; *Israel, that ought to be a pure, chaste virgin to the
14 Lord, is worse than they.* Will [a man] leave the snow of Leb-
anon [which cometh] from the rock of the field? [or] shall the
cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?
*'Will the snow leave Lebanon before any rock of the field? Will
men dig for strange waters perversely, in preference to such as
flow? Will a thirsty traveller in hot weather leave cool water, that
trickles down from Lebanon, or fine spring water, for a standing,
15 muddy lake?'** Because my people hath forgotten me, they have
burned incense to vanity, *to idols,* and they have caused them to
stumble in their ways [from] the ancient paths, to walk in paths,
[in] a way not cast up; *their false prophets and idolatrous priests
have led them from the good old way, to walk in a miry dangerous
16 road;* To make their land desolate, [and] a perpetual hissing;
every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his
head; *the consequence will be, that some will pity, and others will
17 triumph in their calamities.* I will scatter them as with an east
wind before the enemy; I will show them the back, and not the
face, in the day of their calamity.

* Dr. *Blayney.*

18 Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet; *we shall do well enough since we have so many priests, wise men, and prophets on our side.* Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words; *let us lay things to his charge*
19 *that may blast his character, and even take away his life.* Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken not to the voice of them that
20 contend with me. Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, [and] to turn away thy wrath from them, *though I denounced it; since they are incorrigible, I will not any more intercede. The three last verses are the prophet's prediction concerning his enemies, rather than his imprecation.*
21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their [blood] by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and [be] widows; and let their men be put to death; [let] their young men [be] slain by the sword
22 in battle. Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit
23 to take me, and hid snares for my feet. Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay [me:] forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal [thus] with them in the time of thine anger; *they shall not escape the punishment due to their sins.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us reverence the absolute power and sovereignty of God. We meet with frequent comparisons in scripture relating to this, which are very beautiful and striking. The potter can mould the clay into what form he pleases: so has God absolute power over his creatures. Our times, and the events of our lives, are in his hand: In his hand are the fates of nations: and therefore we must not dispute his will; but be content with the stations and circumstances in which he places us.

2. Though God be absolutely powerful, yet he is unchangeably just. His sovereignty is not that arbitrary thing which many people have supposed. God does not say, Because I have your fates in my hand, therefore I will break or raise you, according to my will, without any other regard: but, if a nation repent, and become obedient, I will save them out of the deepest distress: if they go on in sin, I will destroy them when they think themselves most secure. The distinction is very plain, and very important. God distributes his favours as he pleases, for he is a debtor to no man. But he never punishes by prerogative; or where there is not guilt to deserve it; and in the final distribution of rewards and punishments, *he will render to every man according to his works.*

3. Let us lament the prodigious stupidity and obstinacy of sinners. No wonder that God calls the conduct of Israel *a horrible*

thing. They would not give heed to any of Jeremiah's words; but, right or wrong, were determined to act contrary to them. They would not so much as promise to reform; but would follow their own lusts and devices: and they encouraged one another to do so. This is the case of many under a christian name; and rather than part with their sins, they will smite, with their tongue at least, the prophets who reprove them. But God will bring upon them the judgments they despise, and overwhelm them with everlasting destruction.

4. It will be a great satisfaction to us, when censured and reproached, to be conscious that we have not deserved it: but that, on the contrary, we have wished well and endeavoured to do kindness to those who have censured us. This is an amiable part of Jeremiah's character, *v.* 20, and shows, that his imprecations did not proceed from a malicious, revengeful spirit, but were prophetic denunciations. Thus let us *bless them that curse us, and pray for those that despitefully use us; rendering blessing for cursing. This will be our rejoicing in the day of evil. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

CHAP. XIX.

By the significant type of breaking the potter's vessel, Jeremiah is directed to predict the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. The prophets frequently taught by symbolic actions, as well as by words.

1 THUS saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen
bottle, *or vessel,* and [take] of the ancients of the people,
and of the ancients of the priests; *that is, the elders of the peo-*
ple, some of the great council, and the heads of the courses of the
2 *priests;* And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom,
which [is] by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the
3 words that I shall tell thee, And say, Hear ye the word of the
LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, *that is,*
the princes of the blood, and chief magistrates; Thus saith the
LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle;
so dreadful will it be that it shall astonish and terrify every one.
4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place,
this holy city, the place of my residence, and have burned incense
in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have
known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with
the blood of innocents; *have improved upon their fathers' idola-*
try, and the wickedness of former kings, and sacrificed their chil-
5 *dren to Molech, or the sun;* They have built also the high places
of Baal, *another name for the sun,* to burn their sons with fire
[for] burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor
spake [it,] neither came [it] into my mind, *but which I express-*

6 *by forbade, Deut.* xii. 31. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaugh-
7 ter. And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; *they shall be defeated and destroyed, and see the vanity of those contrivances, by which*
8 *they thought to escape my judgments.* And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall
9 be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof. And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and
10 they that seek their lives, shall straiten them. Then shalt thou break the bottle, *or vessel,* in the sight of the men that go with
11 thee,* And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as [one] breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury [them] in Tophet, till [there be] no place to bury.
12 Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and [even] make this city as Tophet, *a place of*
13 *slaughter and burials:* And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled, *by reason of the dead bodies there, unburied,* as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto
14 other gods.† Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to propheay, and he stood in the court of the LORD's house; and said to all the people, *to some of the priests that would not go with him, or could not leave the temple, and to the people, probably at the hour of sacrifice, when many*
15 *were assembled,* Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns, *the other cities of Judah,* all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW kind is God to take so many methods to prevent the ruin of sinners. Judgments were to be plainly threatened by Jeremiah, and the causes of them specified. This sermon was

* Probably some had made a jest of the representation in the former chapter, saying, We have been made and hardened long ago, and shall not be easily broken. But the prophet was now to break the vessel in their sight, to represent their utter destruction.

† Josiah had defiled this place, by burning dead men's bones there: the filth of the city also was carried into it, and a fire kept burning to consume it. Such was the state of Tophet when this message was delivered. What a dreadful representation of Jerusalem and the other cities which should be made like it! Hence it came to be used as an emblem of hell.

to be preached at Tophet, that their imaginations might be struck with the horrible scene before their eyes. So unwilling was a gracious God to leave any method untried, that might awaken these stupid people. And he still bears with sinners; commands his ministers to urge every topic and argument likely to influence them; and has appointed some sacramental signs, the more deeply to impress their minds. So unwilling is he that any should perish; and so inexcusable will be the guilt of sinners if all has no effect.

2. It becomes the greatest of men to pay a serious regard to all divine messages. The princes, priests, and elders of Judah, (though it appears that they hated and despised Jeremiah) had yet such a sense of decency and regard to the message from God, that they followed him to Tophet. Thus should those who are most respectable for age, wealth, and station, reverence the word of God, and attend upon his institutions. Their own salvation depends upon it; and their example will have great influence upon others. If superiors allow themselves to show any slight to divine ordinances, their inferiors will pay no regard to them: and thus the little religion which is left among us, may soon be quite lost.

3. Whatever the counsel and opinion of wicked men may be, God will defeat them, and fulfil his own threatenings to the uttermost. This is frequently repeated; viz. that God will do all that he has declared; and bring about all the evil he has pronounced. His judgments will be found to be as dreadful as his word declares them to be, whether men will believe it or not. *They think him to be such an one as themselves:* that he forgets what he has threatened, or will not fully execute it. But *God is faithful, and cannot deny himself.* Let us therefore never harden our hearts; but diligently hear and obey his word: so shall we escape the evil which shall come upon the obstinate, and stand before the Son of man.

CHAP. XX.

In this chapter, Pashur, for smiting Jeremiah, receives a new name, and a fearful doom; Jeremiah complains on account of the difficulties and persecutions he met with in the discharge of his office.

1 NOW Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who [was] also chief governor in the house of the LORD, *that is, head of the course of Immer, which was now in waiting,* heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things; *or rather, heard him*
2 *prophesy these things himself.* Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that [were] in the high gate of Benjamin, which [was] by the house of the LORD, *where he continued all night, publicly exposed to the ridicule of the people,*
3 *in order to punish and silence him.* And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy

name Pashur, but Magormissabib, *that is, fear round about.*
4 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to
thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of
their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold [it;] *thou thyself*
shalt be an example of all the dreadful calamities which are coming
upon thy friends and country, even such miseries as shall terrify
both thee and them: and I will give all Judah into the hand of
the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Baby-
5 lon, and shall slay *many of* them with the sword. Moreover I
will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours
thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treas-
ures of the kings of Judah, *all their magazines and riches*, will I
give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and
6 take them, and carry them to Babylon. And thou, Pashur, and
all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou
shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be
buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast pro-
phesied lies; *to whom thou hast promised peace and deliverance in*
the Lord's name. The prophet then proceeds to describe the
workings of his own mind, which were not very regular.
7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived:* thou
art stronger than I, and hast prevailed; *I was content with my*
former state, and would gladly have declined the prophetic office;
but thy command and inspiration overpowered me: I am in de-
8 rision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried
out, I cried violence and spoil; *I spake earnestly, I complained*
of their violence and spoil, and threatened them with worse things;
because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me,
and a derision, daily, *therefore they insulted me, and derided my*
9 *message.* Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor
speak any more in his name. But [his word] was in mine
heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary
with forbearing, and I could not [stay;] *I had such an impulse*
on my spirit that I could not rest; it broke out like a fire that was
pent up.
10 For I heard the defaming of many, *the reproach of many Ma-*
gormissabibs like Pashur, fear on every side, *that is, many perse-*
cuting enemies, whose doom shall be like Pashur's. Report, [say
they,] and we will report it; *set a lie a going, and we will push*
it forward: All my familiars watched for my halting, [saying,]
Peradventure he will be enticed and we shall prevail against
him, and we shall take our revenge on him; *they represented*
me as a traitor to my country, and as corrupted by the king of Ba-
bylon; they endeavoured to provoke me to say something, for
11 *which they might accuse me. Thus was Christ served.* But the
LORD [is] with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my per-
secutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be

* He misunderstood the divine promise; he expected he should have no oppression; but God had only promised that his life should be spared. Or it may be rendered, *Thou hast persuaded me, and I was allured;* and this sense is favoured by the next words.

greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: [their] everlast-
12 ing confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O LORD of hosts, that triest *the faith and patience of* the righteous, *by afflictions*, [and] seest the reins and the heart, *discoverest their conspiracies, while they wear a mask of friendship*, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause; *I leave it to thee*
13 *to vindicate me; and in confidence that thou wilt do so, I add*, Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers. *It would have been happy if the prophet could have maintained this temper; but human infirmity and corruption prevailed when he added*,
14 Cursed [be] the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed; *let there be no congrat-*
15 *ulations, as usual.* Cursed [be] the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him
16 very glad, *being probably the first born, and a priest.* And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not; *he did not lighten their misery:* and let him hear the cry, *the alarm of the enemy*, in the morning, and the shout-
17 ing at noontide; Because he slew me not from the womb, *or, because I was not slain;* or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb [to be] always great [with me.*]
18 Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW dreadful is the case of that man who is a terror to himself! Nothing more dreadful on this side hell could be threatened against Pashur, than to be, not only in distress, but in despair; his spirit in continual alarm and terror; his own imagination always tormenting him; and his inward terror such as he could not conceal, but which appeared in so horrible a light, as even to terrify his friends. This is the case of some sinners now; and those have reason to fear this, who set themselves against the word of God and his faithful ministers; that is, who reproach it, and deride them. If they will not hear the reproofs of God's prophets, they will hear them from their own consciences. Let it be our care to fear God, to reverence his word, and keep his commandments; then God will not be our terror, but our hope and our joy.

2. The case of the prophet was a very pitiable one; and so is the case of those ministers who meet with the like treatment now. What cruel usage did he experience! what wicked, base contrivances were formed to injure his reputation, hinder his usefulness, and destroy his life! and all this because he was faithful, serious, and affectionate in delivering the word of the Lord. Good minis-

* This language showed very much impatience and ungoverned passion. This was not setting his face like a flint; and no man could be permitted by the Spirit of God to speak such language. It is a maxim of great importance, to distinguish between those things which the prophets delivered in the name of the Lord, and the workings of their own minds; which were sometimes irregular, and no doubt were recorded for our warning.

ters in the present day often meet with ill treatment. If they are faithful reprovers, and deliver their messages in a lively, affectionate manner, careless hearers, and those who hate to be serious, will deride and banter them, and perhaps be glad to raise and spread evil reports of them. This is a strong temptation to them to decline their work and to preach no more; but yet they dare not do it. Let hearers be careful not to bring their ministers unto this difficulty, and lead them into such a temptation; but suffer them, out of regard to God, to themselves, and to their charge, *to reprove, rebuke, and exhort*, with all plainness and fervency of spirit; and pray that the Lord may be with them to support and encourage them.

3. See how weakly and wickedly even good men will talk, when they suffer their passions to govern them. Who would have thought that Jeremiah should have uttered such words as these? What folly and nonsense was it to curse his birth day! to curse a messenger, for the sake of a kindly intended message! How brutish and barbarous to wish his mother had died in childbed with him! This would not have been recorded by him, had he not sincerely repented of it, and intended it (as the Spirit of God no doubt did) for our caution. Thus absurdly and wickedly do men of strong passions and hasty spirits talk, when they meet with injuries and affronts. We see in the prophet how much need we all have to keep a constant, resolute guard upon our spirits; especially those whose tempers are naturally hot and hasty. Let us stifle the first risings of passion and resentment; and earnestly implore the divine help, when we are entering into temptation; because for such sinful words and disorderly workings of mind, *God will bring us into judgment*. Let us take the great prophet for an example, even Jesus Christ; and *learn of him, who was meek and lowly in heart; and we shall find rest to our souls.*

CHAP. XXI, XXII. 1—9.

*This chapter is transposed, as are many of the following. They relate to events which happened in some former reign; whereas this relates to the reign of Zedekiah, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Chaldeans, the Egyptians came to help the Jews, the Chaldeans drew off their forces and raised the siege: in this interval the chapter before us was written.**

1 THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah,
2 and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying, Inquire,

* It is an observable circumstance, that in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and in that by the Romans, the besieging armies raised the siege for a while, and thereby gave God's faithful servants an opportunity to go out of it; as the prophet before the first, and Christ before the last, ordered them to do. This gave others an opportunity to come into the city, trusting to its strength; so that more people were destroyed by the famine, the pestilence occasioned by it, and the sword of the enemy, than otherwise would have been; thus the prophesies were remarkably accomplished.

I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works *which he did for our fathers*, that he may go up from us.

3 Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedeki-
4 ah: Thus saith the Lord GOD of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that [are] in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and [against] the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city; *your weapons of war, instead of wounding the enemy, shall hurt yourselves, as if a strong wind*
5 *should blow back your arrows into your faces.* And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath; *it shall*
6 *plainly appear that I am on your enemies' side.* And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they, *that is,*
7 *many of them*, shall die of a great pestilence. And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy; *Zedekiah's life shall be preserved, but his sons and great officers shall be slain.*

8 And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death,
how you may escape with your lives, or otherwise you shall be slain;
9 *therefore choose the least of two evils.* He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a
10 prey; *he shall think himself happy if he escapes with his life.* For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

11 12 And touching the house of the king of Judah, [say,] Hear ye the word of the LORD; O house of David, thus saith the LORD: Execute judgment in the morning, *referring to their setting early in the morning in their courts*, and deliver [him that is] spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench [it,] because of the evil
13 of your doings. Behold, I [am] against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, [and] rock of the plain, saith the LORD;* which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into
14 our habitations? But I will punish you according to the fruit of

* The people were proud of their fortifications; part of Jerusalem lay in a valley, but mount Zion, which was their fortress, stood upon a rock; and they confided in its strength, as its ancient inhabitants the Jebusites had done.

your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it; *your numerous stately buildings, which are like a forest, shall all be destroyed.*

1 CHAP. XXII. Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house
2 of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that
3 enter in by these gates: Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent
4 blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his
5 servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a
6 desolation. For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house, of Judah; Thou [art] Gilead unto me, *for wealth and plenty*, [and] the head of Lebanon, *for stateliness and magnificence:* [yet] surely I will make thee a wilderness, [and] cities [which] are
7 not inhabited. And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons, *that is, hewers with axes in their hands:* and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast [them] into
8 the fire. And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city? *he once delighted in it, but*
9 *now it is burned and destroyed.* Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE must not complain when things are bad with us, because they may mend. Jeremiah was in a very fretful, uneasy situation at the conclusion of the last chapter. Here we find him applied to by the king; an honourable message was sent him, and great respect shown him. Let us therefore not despair when our troubles are great and heavy, but hope for better days; continue to honour God, and then he will honour us.

2. Those who despise God's word and ministers in their prosperity, will be glad of their help in the day of affliction. This was the case with Zedekiah and his people. Jeremiah had preached to them in vain, and they had not humbled themselves at the word of the Lord; but now they desire the prophet to inquire of God for them, and to pray for them; but the answer is a prediction of vengeance. Those who affront or forget God, when all goes well and smooth, will be glad of his help, and fly to him in the day of trouble: especially those who put the evil day far from them. Because

he hath done wondrous works for others, they hope he will do the like for them: but yet they will not imitate their good example; and therefore they have no reason to expect it. Let us be ambitious to secure the divine friendship, by obeying his word and hearkening to his ministers; then will he make our prosperity safe and comfortable, and be our support when trouble cometh upon us.

3. See how vain all opposition to God is, and how necessary it is that we submit to him. This people trusted in the strength of their city, and insolently said, 'Who shall enter our habitations?' but God threatens to set his face against them, and to be their enemy; and then no fortification nor power could save them. Thus confident are the hopes of sinners. But if men will rebel against the Most High, he will fight against them, *v.* 5. and who can tell the power of his anger? Let us therefore *take hold of his strength, and be at peace with him.* He sets before us the way of life and the way of death very plainly: let us then submit to him, obey his word, and live.

4. The great design of all these dispensations of Providence, was to promote righteousness. In all the messages of Jeremiah and the other prophets to the people, this is insisted on, that they put away their iniquities; the reigning vices of the times; that they execute judgment and righteousness; do no wrong, but behave in an upright conscientious manner. The intention of all God's precepts and threatenings is to promote righteousness. This shows of how much importance it is in his sight; how necessary to secure his favour, and the prosperity of the nation. Let us therefore *follow after righteousness;* for *the righteous Lord loves it, and it shall be well with those who practise it.*

CHAP. XXII. 10, to the end.

The judgment of Shallum, of Jehoiakim, and of Coniah.

10 WEEP ye not for the dead, *for king Josiah, who was slain in battle,* neither bemoan him: [but] weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his na-
11 tive country. For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum, *or Jehoahaz,* the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place;
12 He shall not return thither any more: But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.*
13 Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; [that] useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work, *but de-*

* Pharaoh had carried him captive into Egypt, and made Jehoiakim his brother king in his stead; to whom the next words belong.

14 *frauds the workmen of their wages;* That saith, I will build me
a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows;
15 and [it is] ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt
thou reign, because thou closest [thyself] in cedar? *will thy
fine house be a fortress and a defence to thee?* did not thy father
eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, [and] then [it was]
well with him? *thy father lived in an honourable and comfortable*
16 *manner, suitably to his rank and character.* He judged the cause
of the poor and needy; then [it was] well [with him: was] not
this to know me? saith the LORD; *this was the effect of his piety,
and an evidence of his good understanding, though he had not so*
17 *fine a palace.* But thine eyes and thine heart [are] not but for
thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for op-
18 pression, and for violence to do [it.] Therefore thus saith the
LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah,
They shall not lament for him, [saying,] Ah my brother! or,
Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, [saying,] Ah lord! or,
Ah his glory! *they shall not lament for him as a near relation, nor
as a people do for a good prince; all his glory is vanished and de-*
19 *parted.* He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and
cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.* *A message is then
sent to Jehoiakim, or Jeconiah his son, here called, by way of con-
tempt, Coniah, and to the people.*
20 Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan,
and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed;
21 *thy allies, especially the Egyptians, have failed thee.* I spake un-
to thee in thy prosperity; [but] thou saidst, I will not hear.
This [hath been] thy manner from thy youth, that thou obey-
22 edst not my voice. The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and
thy lovers shall go into captivity; *thy civil and ecclesiastical
governors shall be destroyed as fruit is by a blasting wind:* surely
then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wicked-
23 ness. O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the
cedars, how gracious shalt thou be, *how humble and submissive,*
when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!†
24 [As] I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoia-
kim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, *(a pro-
verbial expression for a thing that is very dear and valuable,)* yet
25 would I pluck thee thence; And I will give thee into the hand
of them that seek thy life, and into the hand [of them] whose
face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of
26 Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast
thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country,
27 where ye were not born; and there ye shall die.‡ But to the

* Accordingly Josephus tells us that he was slain in a sally, when the Chaldeans came against Jerusalem; and that his dead body being found, was treated in this contemptuous manner.

† The Jewish nation is here compared to a woman living in luxury, in a splendid palace, wainscoated with cedar; but, as the finest house would not prevent her pain when travail came upon her, so God would bring such pains upon them, that all their grandeur, magnificence, and pride should not support their hearts under it.

‡ As his mother was probably concerned in hardening him against the messages of God, so they should be a grief of heart to each other.

land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not re-
28 turn. [Is] this man Coniah a despised broken idol? [is he] a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure? *though once he was worshipped like an idol, he shall be broken down, stripped of his royalty, trodden under foot, and despised as a broken pitcher:* wherefore are they cast out, *who would have thought he should come to such a condition,* he and his seed, *that is, the royal family, or the children born to him in Babylon, (for he had none before the captivity)* and are
29 cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, *O*
30 *land of Judah,* hear the word of the LORD, Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man [that] shall not prosper in his day: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah; *that is, he shall have no child to be his successor in the kingdom.**

REFLECTIONS.

1. WHEN good men die, and leave wicked children behind them, there is more reason to weep for the children than for the fathers, *v.* 10. Josiah was much lamented; yet there is little reason to lament the death of such men; for they are gone to rest, are taken from the evil to come, and received to glory, beyond the reach of sin and sorrow; but let us weep over their degenerate children, whose guilt is aggravated by the instructions and examples of their pious parents. They bring more dishonour on religion, and do more mischief to others, than those who have not such advantages; they are seldom reclaimed, but generally go on to *treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Their case is indeed truly pitiable.

2. See the wickedness of injustice and oppression. The sources of it are pride and covetousness. Jehoiakim could not be content with his father's palace, but must have a better. Yet he loved his money too well to part with it, and therefore never paid his workmen, or not so much as was their due. Thus many are fond of making a figure in life, who yet have not wherewith to support it: they get rich by the gains of oppression, and by screwing their workmen and servants, in order to increase their wealth, or support their extravagance. But we here see that God takes notice of and will punish the wrong which is done by rich and great men to their poor workmen and labourers; for *their cry cometh into the ears of the Lord God of hosts.*

3. It would be more for the honour and happiness of children to imitate their fathers' virtues, than to exceed them in wealth and grandeur. Jehoiakim is reminded of his father's piety and integrity, and of the prosperity and honour which attended him. There are many persons who, when they inherit their fathers' substance, de-

* Zedekiah, his successor, being his uncle, none of his posterity ever sat upon the throne: though his grandson Zerubbabel was a governor, yet the royal power was gone; and he could not be said to sit upon the throne of David, as he was appointed by the king of Persia.

spise their old notions, and fashions, and way of living; while they are destitute of their excellencies. They make those inroads on justice and charity, which their fathers durst not have done: they are neither so just in their dealings, so charitable to the poor, nor so generous for the support of religion, as their ancestors were. Yet they think it is enough that they are richer than they. A sad exchange! Let us consider what was truly excellent in our predecessors, and imitate that; and if our circumstances are better than theirs, let us be more generous and charitable than they were. All the comfort they had in religion, should recommend it to us; and we should be followers of them, that it may be well with us now and for ever, as it undoubtedly is with those who lived and died under its influence.

4. We are taught the danger of prosperity. These unhappy princes are melancholy instances how sadly wealth and power may be abused; but the worst effect of prosperity is, that it puffs up men's minds, *v.* 21. They think themselves too wise to need advice; despise the word of God, and its preachers; and take fire at the most distant hint of reproof. It is a wretched thing when prosperity hardens the mind against religious impressions; when men's hearts rise with their fortunes, and they proceed to contemn God, as well as man. The case may soon be altered with them; and they will then be as abject and mean, as they were before insolent, *v.* 23. It is well if adversity makes them truly humble and penitent. Let us take heed, brethren, lest we forget God and our duty in prosperous seasons; and therefore, *not be high minded, but fear.*

CHAP. XXIII.

The prophecy goes on to threaten the rulers and guides of the people; but concludes with promises of deliverances from captivity, of better times under the Messiah, and of a future restoration of the Jews to their own land, v. 1—8: *the ninth verse begins another subject; Jeremiah exhorts the people not to listen to false prophets, and threatens the pretenders to inspiration and the scoffers at true prophecy.*

1 WO be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the
sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD; *that is, to the*
2 *ecclesiastical and civil governors.* Therefore thus saith the Lord
GOD of Israel against the pastors that feed, *or should have fed,*
my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away
by your ill example and want of care, and have not visited them:
behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the
3 LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all
countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again
4 to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I

will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them, *that is, governors after the captivity, or rather, in the latter days:* and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; *he shall* 6 *impartially reward the righteous and the wicked.* In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this [is] his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; *or, this is the name by which Jehovah shall call him, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, that is, the means of* 7 *our justification and salvation.** Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, *that is, the latter days,* that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of 8 Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them: and they shall dwell in their own land; *this last deliverance shall eclipse the former, and be as life from the dead.*

9 Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man; and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness, *which they have profaned; I am deeply affected with their horrible sin, and tremble to deliver my* 10 *message.* For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing, *or perjury,* the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force [is] not right; *their zeal is not to promote religion, but* 11 *wickedness.* For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD; *I have* 12 *found their idolatries there.* Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery [ways] in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein; *they promise others peace and light, but they shall miss of both themselves, and fall and miscarry in their designs:* for I will bring evil upon them, [even] the year of their visita- 13 tion, saith the LORD. And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they have prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err; *I have seen this comparatively as a small matter.* 14 I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness; *calling their own fancies divine oracles, and promising impunity:* they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhab- 15 itants thereof as Gomorrah. Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land; *they have made others vile by their counsels and examples.*

* See Dr. Blayney's note on this passage.

16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of
the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain, *that*
is, deceive you: they speak a vision of their own heart, [and] not
17 out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that
despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace: and they
say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own
18 heart, No evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood *in* the
counsel of the LORD, and who hath perceived and heard his
word? who hath marked his word, and heard [it;] *they never*
took paine to distinguish my suggestions from their own foolish
reasonings, else, instead of peace, they would have foretold judg-
19 *ments.* Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury,
even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the
20 head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD shall not return,
shall not turn back, or rest, until he have executed, and till he
have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye
shall consider it perfectly; *in your captivity and distress ye shall*
21 *understand and consider the meaning of these prophecies.* I have
not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to
22 them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my coun-
sel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they
should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil
23 of their doings, *they would have had some success.* [Am] I a
God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? *in heaven,*
and not in earth? cannot I discern what is doing at the greatest
24 *distance?* Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not
see him? saith the LORD: *can they think to deceive and impose*
25 *upon me?* Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. I
have heard what the prophets said, *though they thought I did not,*
that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have
26 dreamed; *I have a divine admonition to deliver.* How long shall
[this] be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea,
27 [they are] prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which
think, *or contrive,* to cause my people to forget my name by their
dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their
fathers have forgotten my name for Baal; *their design is to lead*
28 *them to idolatry, and to forget me and my laws.* The prophet
that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; *tell it as a dream that*
deserves no regard; and he that hath my word, let him speak
my word faithfully: What [is] the chaff to the wheat? saith the
LORD; *there is as much difference between true and false prophets,*
29 *and their way of preaching, as between chaff and wheat.* [Is] not
my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer
[that] breaketh the rock in pieces? *that breaks through all oppo-*
sition, and subdues the most obdurate hearts; and the words of the
true prophets had often this effect, which was a proof that they
30 *were not counterfeit.* Therefore, behold, I [am] against the
prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from
his neighbour, *that is, some of their good sayings, and apply them*
31 *to their own purposes; imitating their manner of address.* Be-

hold, I [am] against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use, *or smooth*, their tongues, and say, He saith; *pretending a divine*
32 *authority for what they deliver*. Behold, I [am] against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness; *their unsteady and inconsistent conduct;* yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

33 And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What [is] the burden of the LORD? *when they meet thee, and ask in a taunting and scornful way, what the burden of the Lord now is; (as prophecies are often called, because they contained very weighty and important matters;)* thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD; *or rather, Ye are the burden, and I will cast you off, saith*
34 *the Lord*. And [as for] the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even pun-
35 ish that man and his house. Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, *instead of that profane jesting language, you should say*, What hath the LORD an-
36 swered? and, What hath the LORD spoken? And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; *he that makes a jest of it shall feel it;* for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of
37 hosts our God, *who is able to accomplish his threatenings*. Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered
38 thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken? But since ye say, *or, if ye will say*, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of
39 the LORD: Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your
40 fathers, [and cast you] out of my presence: And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us regard Jesus Christ in the view in which he is here foretold: as a Branch of David, in whom the prophecies are fulfilled; and as our Righteousness, as one who is perfectly righteous himself, and who wrought out righteousness for his people. The dignity of his person, the excellency of his character, and his divine appointment, all join to render him a complete Saviour. May we then *look to him, and be saved*. He will take care of his church and provide for his flock, when those who should feed it, neglect it; and those who should defend it, devour it.

2. Let us reverence the omniscience of God. These prophets would not have been so wicked; nor the people so easily imposed upon, had they not forgotten this, and said, *The Lord doth not see.*

But there is no concealing any thing from him; no imposing upon him: darkness and distance are no obstruction to his view. Let us reflect seriously on this; be afraid of secret sins; and approve ourselves to him.

3. Let us admire the power of the word of God. It is as fire, and as a hammer; dissolving the stubborn spirit; breaking the most rocky heart. It has a wonderful efficacy for these purposes; and it is a proof of its divine authority when such effects attend it. Let us pray that it may have this effect upon our souls; and instead of being a savour of death may be a savour of life to them.

4. Here is an awful lesson to ministers to preach God's word faithfully, and to deal plainly with immortal souls. What a number of expressions have we here of God's displeasure against false prophets and deceivers! May ministers take warning, and not smooth their tongues, but show men their transgressions. May they never strengthen the hands of the wicked, by promising them peace; by lowering the terms of salvation, or weakening the threatenings of God's word. May they never lead people to substitute any thing for real holiness. To say nothing but what is pleasing and plausible; to be more fearful of offending man than God, are proofs that they never stood in his counsel, nor understood his words. This is doing men the greatest mischief imaginable. May they therefore *watch for souls as those that must give an account.*

5. See the evil and danger of making a jest of scripture truths, or scripture language. This was the sin of the Jews; we see how highly God resented it; and how awfully he forbids it, on pain of his highest displeasure. It is common for men to turn sacred things into ridicule, and to make a jest of the language of ministers, though it be the language of scripture, and the language of the Spirit of God. Sometimes those who profess godliness will use scripture phrases and expressions in a light, trifling manner, and make it their jest, when perhaps they have no evil intention. But let them beware of this, lest their own tongues fall upon them, *v.* 36. They who allow themselves in this indecent, irreverent, profane language, will hereafter perfectly understand what it is to trifle with sacred things, and what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. God and his word jest with no man, and therefore they are not to be jested with.

CHAP. XXIV.

In the former chapter the ruin of Jerusalem and the Jewish state was foretold; here, for the encouragement of the prophet and the pious people in the land, it is declared, that though all should suffer, God would make a distinction between the precious and the vile.

1 THE LORD showed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs [were] set before the temple of the LORD, *these were offered, according to the law, as part of their first fruits,* after that

Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon; *because they wanted these most, or to*
2 *prevent the Jews fortifying their city and making weapons.* One basket [had] very good figs, [even] like the figs [that are] first ripe: and the other basket [had] very naughty figs, which could
3 not be eaten, they were so bad. Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

4 5 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge, *or distinguish*, them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for [their] good, *or, in a favourable manner; that is, I will show them favour, and make their captivity work for*
6 *their good.** For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull [them] down; and I will plant them, and not pluck [them] up; *I will give them favour in the land of their captivity, and bring them or their posterity back, and fix them in a state*
7 *of prosperity.* And I will give them an heart to know me, that I [am] the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart; *they shall know God practically, renounce their idolatry, return to their duty, and live in the fear of God, and in obedience to his commands.*†

8 And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt, *that*
9 *went to settle in Egypt for security:* And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for [their] hurt, [to be] a reproach and a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them; *they shall be signal instances of God's displeasure, and become so contemptible and miserable, that the common form of cursing shall be, 'God make you like*
10 *them.'* And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers; *I will send one calamity after another upon them, so that neither they nor their posterity shall ever return to their own land.*

* Probably most of these were pious men: God might influence the hearts of the conquerors to take such, while those who stayed behind thought themselves better beloved of God than their brethren who were carried captive; but God would show them the contrary.

† Their former calamities had no such effect, but seemed rather to harden them; this therefore could not be a conjecture of Jeremiah's, for it was a most unlikely thing; but the spirit of prophecy plainly appears in it.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS short chapter is exceeding useful, as it gives us a key to some of the most mysterious dispensations of Providence. We learn,

1. That one event in this respect happens to all. The good and the bad alike are carried captive; *there is no knowing good or evil by any thing that happens under the sun.* Therefore we must not censure or judge our brethren, when they meet with great calamities, nor reckon their sufferings to be divine judgments.

2. We see how differently the same afflictions work upon the good and bad. These first captives seemed to be in very deplorable circumstances; they were driven from their country; lost their estates, their substance, and liberty; and were carried into a heathen land, among strangers, enemies, and oppressors; far from their friends, and the house and ordinances of God. Yet this was all for their good; to cure them of idolatry, and bring them to know and serve the God of Israel: while their countrymen, though spared for a time, were at length carried away for their hurt and ruin. Thus afflictions are still different in their effects on the righteous and on the wicked. God's intentions to his people are most kind when his judgments seem most severe: but to his enemies they are not the correction of a father, but the sword of an executioner.

3. We are here taught the design of afflictions, *v.* 7. viz. *to bring us to know God, to return to him with our whole heart,* and so become *his people.* Though afflictions are adapted to answer this end, yet they will not do it without divine agency; therefore God promises, *I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord.* This therefore should be the subject of our prayers, especially in seasons of distress, that God would give us such an heart: and then will he fulfil that glorious promise, that *all things shall work together for our good.*

CHAP. XXV.

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of Judea and the neighbouring countries by Nebuchadnezzar.

1 THE word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *when he reigned with his father,* that [was] the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, *and then the*
2 *seventy years of captivity began;* The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabi-
3 tants of Jerusalem, saying, From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that [is] the

three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto
me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but
4 ye have not hearkened. And the LORD hath sent unto you all
his servants the prophets, rising early and sending [them;] but
5 ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. They
said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from
the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD
hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever:
6 And go not after other gods to serve them; and to worship
them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your
7 hands; and I will do you no hurt. Yet ye have not hearkened
unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger
with the works of your hands to your own hurt.
8 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not
9 heard my words, Behold, I will send and take all the families
of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of
Babylon, my servant, *whom I will make use of as a scourge upon
the nations*, and will bring them against this land, and against
the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round
about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an aston-
10 ishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I
will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of glad-
ness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride,
the sound of the milstones, and the light of the candle; *they*
11 *shall have neither trade nor pleasure*. And this whole land shall
be a desolation, [and] an astonishment; and these nations shall
12 serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to
pass, when seventy years are accomplished, [that] I will pun-
ish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for
their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it
13 perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my
words which I have pronounced against it, [even] all that is
written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all
14 the nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve
themselves of them also; *or, for of them, even of these, shall
many nations and great kings exact service; that is, Cyrus
and Darius, the Medes and Persians, and their allies:* and I will
recompense them according to their deeds, and according to
the works of their own hands.
15 For thus saith the Lord GOD of Israel unto me; Take the
wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to
whom I send thee, to drink it, *that is, prophesy against them.*
16 And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, *they shall be
intoxicated, lose their understanding, and act like madmen*, be-
17 cause of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I
the cup at the LORD's hand, and made all the nations to drink,
to whom the LORD had sent me; *an allusion to the custom of
drinking round in company; and the prophets are said to do*
18 *that which they foretold God would do:* [To wit,] Jerusalem, and
the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes there-

of, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as [it is] this day; *the judgment is already begun in*
19 *Judea, and some are carried captive;* Pharaoh king of Egypt, and
20 his servants, and his princes, and all his people; And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, *or Gaza,* and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, *a mingled people near the Rea sea, governors of little states, and heads of clans,*
21 22 Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which [are] beyond the sea, *or, regions by the sea side,*
23 *which lay on the midland sea, what we call the Levant,* Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all [that are] in the utmost corners, *that have their coast insulated, or their hair polled, that is, the Arabian*
24 *clans,* And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert, And all the kings of Zimri,
25 26 and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which [are] upon the face of the earth; *the whole empire of Nebuchadnezzar, who had conquered almost all the earth:* and the king of Sheshach, *that is, Babylon,*
27 shall drink after them. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spew, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you; *that is, ye shall do so, and be so confounded, that ye shall not be able to do any thing, either by*
28 *skill or force.* And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith
29 the LORD of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts, *for learning your idolatry, and therefore certainly*
30 *upon you who taught them.* Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread [the grapes,] against all the inhabitants of the earth; *that is, he shall make himself known by denouncing and ex-*
31 *ecuting dreadful judgments.* A noise shall come [even] to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; *he will judge them and set himself against them;* he will give them [that are] wicked to the
32 sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great
33 whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

34 Howl, ye shepherds, *ye princes and magistrates*, and cry;
and wallow yourselves [in the ashes,] ye principal of the flock,
ye great men: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel
35 *that is broken, and no longer valued or regarded.* And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to
36 escape. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, [shall be heard:] for the LORD hath
37 spoiled their pasture. And the peaceable habitations, *or, the habitations of Salem, or Jerusalem, its palaces and houses*, are cut
38 down because of the fierce anger of the LORD. He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion; *who is come abroad to range for prey:* for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

REFLECTIONS.

1. GOD keeps an exact account what religious advantages we have been favoured with, and how long we have enjoyed them, *v.* 3, 4. He reminds the Jews of this, to shame their ignorance and disobedience. An awful thought: which it becomes us to enter into, that we may consider what improvement we have made of our advantages, and what account we shall give of them, when *for all these things God shall bring us into judgment.*

2. See what use God makes of the princes of the earth; to execute his purposes, *v.* 9. Nebuchadnezzar was pursuing his ambitious, covetous ends; but God was fulfilling his own designs by him. Those who are most troublesome to God's people, are but his rod: the tyrants and conquerors of the earth are but fulfilling his pleasure: and at length their time shall come to fall, their ambition and cruelty shall be punished. It is not what men do, but the temper and principle from which they do it, that renders them acceptable to God: let us therefore *judge nothing before the time.*

3. See what it is that provokes God to punish, viz. disobedience, *v.* 6. Let sinners take warning, and return to God and their duty; then they will escape final hurt. Let God's people be careful to behave in an holy, regular manner; then, though he may chasten them for the trial and improvement of their graces, it will be all for their good.

4. If God afflicts his own people, what have not his enemies to fear? *v.* 29. If Judah, that had some good people among them, suffered so much, surely the idolatrous nations about them would suffer more. If good men are afflicted, what must the wicked expect? *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

5. Let us observe and lament the miseries and desolations of war. The nations are here described as all drunken and infatuated; which, by the way, shows us what a beastly, detestable vice drunkenness is. God makes use of this emblem to show how they should

stagger in their counsels; be all in perplexity and confusion, and totally incapable of defending themselves; the strongest and greatest men should be thrown into hurry and consternation; the peaceable habitations destroyed; and the quiet in the land suffer, as well as others. This is a case much to be lamented; and the continuance of the divine displeasure on the nations deprecated. But whatever the times are, let the wicked remember, that *in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*

CHAP. XXVI.

This chapter gives an account of the danger which Jeremiah was brought into for delivering his message from the Lord faithfully.

1 IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah
king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying,
2 Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD's house, *probably at one of the solemn feasts*, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word, *as you may be tempted to do, the message being so likely*
3 *to provoke them:* If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.
4 And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me to walk in my law, which I have set be-
5 fore you: To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending
6 [them,] but ye have not hearkened; Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth; *when a curse is denounced upon a city, it*
7 *shall be,* '*God make it like Jerusalem.*' So the priests and the *false* prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD, *that is, in one of the courts, which were all called the house, or temple.*
8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded [him] to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die, *because thou hast disturbed the government, and discouraged the people from defend-*
9 *ing their country.* Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, *and laid an information against him before the princes, in the courts of*
10 *justice.* When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the

LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD's
11 [house,] *at which gate the court sat, as usual.* Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man [is] worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.
12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard; *I have*
13 *said nothing but what God commanded me.* Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you; *repeating his message very*
14 *courageously, and adding,* As for me, behold, I [am] in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you; *if God see fit to permit you to put me to death, I am satisfied I can-*
15 *not die in a better cause.* But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.
16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man [is] not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God; *the princes and*
17 *people hearing his apology were for sparing him.* Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly
18 of the people, saying, Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be ploughed [like] a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house, *the hill on which the temple stands,* as the high places of a forest, *overgrown with thorns and briars.*
19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our
20 souls *by destroying Jeremiah.* And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against
21 this land according to all the words of Jeremiah: And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into
22 Egypt. And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, [namely,] Elnathan the son of Achbor, and [certain] men with him
23 into Egypt. And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword,* and cast his dead body into the graves of the common

* This story is no where else recorded. Many prophets were injured and destroyed, that we read nothing of in the scripture history. This story was alleged by Jeremiah's enemies, as a precedent for putting such a person to death: though some think it was recorded by himself, or the historian, to show the goodness of God in preserving him.

people; *being probably descended from some good family, he would not suffer him to be buried with his ancestors, but interred*
24 *him with common people, or malefactors.* Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, *a person of great influence, and a minister in Josiah's court,* (2 *Kings* xxii. 12.) was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death; *he interposed, and rescued him.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. HOW fit is it for the Lord's ministers to be faithful and courageous in delivering their messages! Jeremiah was commanded not to diminish a word; not to put his message into less offensive expressions, than those in which he received it; and God defended him, while Urijah's cowardice cost him his life. Thus must christian ministers act; faithfully and boldly reprove the vices which are found among those whom they address, and *declare the whole counsel of God;* never diminishing a word, either through fear, favour, or flattery. If they keep close to their instructions, the God whom they serve will bear them out, however men may be offended at them. And their being offended is indeed not much to be regarded, since none will be so, but those who know in their own consciences that they are guilty of the vices reproved.

2. See the influence which God has over the spirits of men, and how easily he can turn them. The people were at first for having Jeremiah put to death; then, when they heard his defence, they were for having him spared. Upon the precedent being quoted for putting him to death (even the case of Urijah) it seems that they altered their sentiments again, but Ahikam saved him. How little dependence is to be had upon popular cries, whether for or against a man! God raised up a friend for Jeremiah. This should engage us to be firm and resolute in the cause of God and religion, since he knows how to deliver the godly out of their tribulations. *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him; but the Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.* *Psalm* xxxvii. 32, 33.

CHAP. XXVII.

Under the type of bonds and yokes, Jeremiah prophesieth the subduing of the neighbouring kings by Nebuchadnezzar.

1 IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim* the son of Josiah
king of Judah, came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD,
2 saying, Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and

* Some careless transcriber has put, by mistake, Jehoiakim for Zedekiah, as appears from several verses in this chapter, and the beginning of the next. Mistakes of names and dates must often happen in transcribing ancient books; but they no way affect their general credibility, and but seldom their sense.

3 yokes, and put them upon thy neck,* And send them to the
king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the
Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon,
by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto
Zedekiah king of Judah, *that is, ambassadors, who came to con-*
gratulate Zedekiah on his accession; or rather, to concert measures
4 *to throw off the yoke of the king of Babylon;* And command them
to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the
5 God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; I have
made the earth, the man and the beast that [are] upon the
ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have
6 given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me, And now have I
given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king
of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field, *their cattle,*
in which much of their substance consisted, have I given him also
7 to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and
his son's son, *that is, Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson,*
until the very time of his land come, *the time of his visiting and*
reckoning with them: and then many nations and great kings
shall serve themselves of him, *that is, shall exact service of him.*†
8 And it shall come to pass, [that] the nation and kingdom which
will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon,
and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of
Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the
sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have
9 consumed them by his hand.‡ Therefore hearken not ye to
your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor
to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you,
10 saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: For they proph-
esy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land, and that
I should drive you out, and ye should perish; *if therefore you*
11 *suffer yourselves to be deceived by them, ye shall be removed.* But
the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of
Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their
own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell there-
in; *they shall become his tributaries, and probably live better than*
they did before.
12 I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these
words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of
13 Babylon, and serve him, and his people, and live.‖ Why will
ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by

* The prophets used to prophesy by signs and actions, as well as by words. The yoke consisted of two boards, with holes cut in the middle to fit the neck, and were tied together with bands; so that it was somewhat like our pillories, only these lay on their shoulders; and they put them on malefactors, as we do fetters.

† This is a remarkable prophesy, as the empire of Babylon was now in its greatest power and glory: but it never made any figure after the Persians conquered it.

‡ This threatening was executed by some parts of his army harassing their country, during the thirteen years that he besieged Tyre.

‖ Zedekiah was made king by the king of Babylon, and had sworn fidelity to him, and is reproved, and afterward punished for his perjury.

the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that
14 will not serve the king of Babylon? Therefore hearken not unto
the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall
not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto
15 you. For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they proph-
esy a lie in my name; that I may drive you out, and that ye
might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.
16 Also I spake to the priests and to all this people; *though they were my inveterate enemies, who had endeavoured to take away my life, yet I faithfully warned them, and thus endeavoured to preserve theirs*, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the LORD's house, *which have been taken away in the two former reigns*, shall now shortly be brought again from
17 Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you. Hearken not
unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore
18 should this city be laid waste? But if they [be] prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and [in] the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.
19 For thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning
20 the residue of the vessels that remain in this city, Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;
21 Yea, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain [in] the house of the LORD, and [in] the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem;
22 They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the LORD, *that is, till I visit the vessels; as if he had said, I will come and survey the catalogue of them, and call it over to see that none are wanting*; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place; *though they are so large, weighty and valuable, they shall all be sent by Cyrus, and at his own expense; all which was remarkably fulfilled.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. FROM hence we learn to reverence the supreme power and universal dominion of God, *v.* 5. Being the Creator, he is the supreme proprietor and disposer of all countries and persons; he gives the earth to the children of men, and to each his share; changes times and seasons; sets up kings, and removeth them. Though Nebuchadnezzar was a wicked and tyrannical prince, yet God for wise reasons gave him these countries. Large estates, dominions, and possessions, are not the best things; for God sometimes gives them to the worst of men. Let the thought of his univer-

sal government compose our minds in the most troublesome times; and engage us to be content with that lot which his Providence hath assigned us.

2. We may infer the reasonableness of submitting to the yoke of Christ. *God hath exalted him to be a prince*, given him the earth for his possession, and requires us to be subject to him. God's appointment is a sufficient reason for our subjection; especially when we consider the character of Christ; that his yoke is easy, that if we serve him, we shall live, and that if we do not submit, God will punish us. False notions of liberty are mischievous; the restraints of religion are reasonable and useful. *Kiss the son*, therefore, *lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that trust in him.*

3. God's prophets should be praying men, and use all their interest in heaven for the safety and good of the church, *v.* 18. Which intimates, that true prophets should be men of eminent devotion, and that God would pay a great regard to their intercession. May all God's ministers be devout and holy men! enter tenderly into the concerns of the church, and be fervent in their intercessions before God for its prosperity! and may they be successful in such friendly endeavours to serve it!

CHAP. XXVIII.

Hananiah, by a prophetic action, contradicts Jeremiah's prophecy; who gives a terrible answer, which was soon fulfilled.

1 AND it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, [and] in the fifth month,* [that] Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which [was] of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people,
2 saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon, *that is, his tyrannical power, of which Jeremiah's yoke was an emblem.*
3 Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon:
4 And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.†

* As Zedekiah reigned but eleven years, the fourth could hardly be said to be the beginning of his reign; and therefore some critics would render the words, *when it had been so*, that is, *when Jeremiah had been prophesying with this yoke from the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah to the fourth year*, (in which year he went to Babylon, see *chap.* li. 59.) having put it on when he delivered his prophetic messages.

† This was pleasing enough to the people, because they considered Jeconiah as their lawful king, and Zedekiah, his uncle, as only the lieutenant or viceroy of Nebuchadnezzar: but this prophecy appears at the first view very suspicious, as nothing is said about their repentance and reformation.

5 Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah
in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people
6 that stood in the house of the LORD, Even the prophet Jeremiah
said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words
which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the
LORD's house, and all that is carried away captive, from Baby-
lon into this place; *though I have prophesied evil, I heartily wish*
the good of my country, and that God would revoke the sentence of
7 *ruin which I have pronounced.* Nevertheless hear thou now this
word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people;
8 The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old
prophesied both against many countries, and against great king-
doms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence; *yea, many of the*
Jewish prophets foretold the destruction of their city and country,
and it came to pass; therefore I may be a true prophet, though I
9 *foretell evil.* The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when
the word of the prophet shall come to pass, [then] shall the
prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him; *the event*
will prove whether I speak truth or thou.
10 Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the pro-
11 phet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it. And Hananiah spake in
the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD;
Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Ba-
bylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full
years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way, *having no di-*
rections from the Lord what reply to make.
12 Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah [the pro-
phet,] after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke
13 from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Go and tell
Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast broken
the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of
14 iron; *the more they resist Nebuchadnezzar, the more power he*
shall have over them; they shall bring more confusion into their af-
fairs, and suffer more from him. He then renews the former pro-
15 *phecy in stronger terms.* For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all
these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the
beasts of the field also.
15 Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet,
Hear now Hananiah; the LORD hath not sent thee; but thou
makest this people to trust in a lie; *thou hast taught the people*
to disbelieve his word, and rebel against his commandments.
16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off
the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast
17 taught rebellion against the LORD. So Hananiah the prophet
died the same year in the seventh month, *just two months after*
his prophecy. He had limited the return of Jeconiah and the ves-
sels to two years, that the people might more readily believe him;
Jeremiah confined the evidence of his falsehood to one year; and
two months confirmed it.

REFLECTIONS.

1. FAITHFUL ministers heartily wish the welfare of sinners, though they denounce evil against them, *v.* 7. Jeremiah sincerely desired the prosperity of his country, and that God would revoke the dreadful message sent by him, though they had hated and persecuted him. Thus christian ministers who are faithful to their trust, desire the happiness of the worst of men, though they threaten them with the wrath to come; yea, bear them more good will than those who only prophesy smooth things, and are therefore more agreeable to them. They say no more than Christ and his apostles, and the ministers before them, have said, concerning the evil of sin, and the wrath of God against it: they do not love to terrify and alarm; it gives them pain to do it. But they are compelled by fidelity to God and love to souls: and their hearers should always consider their admonitions in this light.

2. Let us observe and adore the judgment of God upon this infamous liar. What a presumptuous wretch was Hananiah, to declare that God had sent him, when he had not; and to teach the people rebellion against God in his name! All liars are abominable to the God of truth; especially those who falsify his word, and father their lies upon him. Those who encourage sinners in an evil way, who tell them that they shall have peace, bid them not mind what God's ministers say, and thus make them trust in a lie, are the worst and vilest of sinners. May we avoid and abhor all lying and deceit; especially where the souls of men are concerned; for *all liars*, and particularly such as these, *shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire.*

3. How great is the stupidity and hardness of those sinners, who will not be alarmed by the word or the judgments of God. These extraordinary predictions were delivered in the presence of the priests and all the people; and when they saw Hananiah so awfully convicted of being a false prophet by his death, one would have expected that such a providence would have awakened them to attend to Jeremiah's message, and comply with his admonitions. It is strange also that the predictions should have had no effect on Hananiah himself, who knew in his conscience that he was speaking lies in God's name; yet both he and the people continued obstinate, and Jeremiah's words all came true in their destruction. So dreadfully doth sin stupify and besot the human mind. This should teach us to pay a serious regard to God's word; and excite our earnest prayers that he would *deliver us from hardness of heart.*

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains Jeremiah's letter to the captives in Babylon; and the fearful end of Ahab and Zedekiah, two lying prophets.

1 NOW these [are] the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the *false* prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnez-
2 zar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon; (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen *mother*, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpen-
3 ters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;) By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, *to renew his promise of fidelity, and to pay his tribute,*) saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts,
4 the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; *a message that implied encouragement, as it was an evidence*
5 *that God had not cast them off;* Build ye houses, and dwell [in
6 them;] and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished; *think not of a speedy return, but accommodate yourselves to your condition, and make no attempts to shake off the yoke: consider Babylon as your country, and endeavour to be happy there.**
7 And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, *by your loyalty and submission*, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.
8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that [be] in the midst of you, deceive you, *for if you expect soon to return you will not take pains to make your settlements comfortable*, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed, *encouraging them*
9 *to foretell these things, because ye love to hear them.* For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.
10 For thus saith the LORD, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, *at the very instant of, or immediately upon, the completion of seventy years*, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you *or your posterity* to re-
11 turn to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, *though*

* It is to be remembered that these Israelites were not absolute slaves, but were settled as a colony to cultivate some particular part of the country; as the ten tribes and other conquered nations were, whom they brought to their land: this was wise policy, to keep them in subjection.

I seem to have cast you off, to give you an expected end, *such as*
12 *you look for and desire.* Then shall ye call upon me, and ye
13 shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And
ye shall seek me, and find [me,] when ye shall search for me
with all your heart; *I will stir up a spirit of prayer among you;*
ye shall call upon me, and I will answer you, according to the prom-
14 *ises of the law, Deut.* iv. 29. And I will be found of you, saith
the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather
you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have
driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the
place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.
15 Because ye have said, The LORD hath raised us up prophets
in Babylon, *who have foretold different things from what Jeremi-*
16 *ah foretold;** [Know] that thus saith the LORD of the king that
sitteth upon the throne of David, *that is, Zedekiah*, and of all the
people that dwelleth in this city, [and] of your brethren that are
17 not gone forth with you into captivity; Thus saith the LORD of
hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine,
and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot
be eaten, they are so evil; *they shall come to you, and not you to*
18 *them, and shall perish among you.* And I will persecute them
with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and
will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the
earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a
reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:
19 Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD,
which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up
early and sending [them;] but ye would not hear, saith the
LORD, *but rather gave ear to false prophets.*
20 Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the cap-
tivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon: *Whereas*
ye have said, the Lord hath raised us up prophets in Babylon;
21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the
son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which
prophesy a lie unto you in my name, *predicting your speedy re-*
turn; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand Nebuchadrez-
zar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes;
22 And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of
Judah which [are] in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee
like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roast-
ed in the fire;† *probably being incensed against them for persuad-*
ing the people not to settle according to his orders, or sowing
23 *sedition;* Because they have committed villany in Israel, and
have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives,‡ and

* This verse seems to be transposed, it should have come in after v. 20.

† In all probability they were treated in the same manner as was intended for Shedrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *Dan.* iii 20, 21. One would think that it would impress them much to receive such a prophecy, and to see it so remarkably accomplished.

‡ The Jewish rabbins, as Grotius observes, have a tradition that these were the two elders who attempted the chastity of Susannah, the story of which they think to be true in part, though not altogether such as is represented in the Apocrypha.

have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and [am] a witness, saith the LORD, *though men cannot prove it against them.*

24 [Thus] shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite,
25 saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that [are] at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, *in answer to the letter of Shemaiah, which was brought to Jerusalem by those who carried*
26 *Jeremiah's letter to Babylon*, saying, The LORD hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada, the priest, *the high priest who was carried captive*, that ye should be officers in the house of the LORD, for every man, *or, in the case of any one*, [that is] mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldst put him in prison, and in the stocks; *telling him that he had authori-*
27 *ty to punish every one pretending to be a prophet.* Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you? *why hast thou not executed*
28 *thy authority upon him?* For therefore, *or rather, because* he sent unto us [in] Babylon, saying, This [captivity is] long: build ye houses, and dwell [in them;] and plant gardens, and
29 eat the fruit of them. And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet, *though, being a friend to him, he would not show it publicly.*

30 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,
31 Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you
32 to trust in a lie: Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD; *none of his posterity shall live to see the end of the captivity, nor the favour God will show his people both in and after their return.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may infer from hence the usefulness of letters; and how much we may serve God, and instruct and comfort our friends, by writing to them, as well as conversing with them. The art of writing is an inestimable blessing to the world; friendly correspondence is very comfortable, and may be very useful, if our letters are seasoned with grace. This we should be careful of; since, if idle words are to be accounted for, much more will idle letters, as so much more time is spent about them, and the impression made by them, whether it be good or bad, may be more lasting.

2. It is our duty to bring our mind to our condition, whatever it is. The Israelites in Babylon are commanded to act as if they were

at home; to build and plant, not fearing that their masters would deprive them of their possessions; and to encourage themselves with an assurance that they or their children should see better days. This is an important lesson to us. Our situations and circumstances in life are of God's ordering, *v.* 4. We are not to overlook, or be unthankful for, the comforts we have, because some are lost. If we are removed to a distance from our relations and friends, and grafted into new families and settlements, let us accommodate ourselves to them; consult their peace and comfort; and by that means we shall promote our own.

3. How reasonable is it that we should pray for the land of our nativity, *v.* 7. If the Israelites were to consult and pray for the peace of an heathen, tyrannical, and oppressive king and people, among whom they were settled; it is much more our duty, by loyalty, subjection, and every other instance of good behaviour, to seek the peace of our native country, and the prosperity of the good government we live under; to *pray for our king, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead peaceable and quiet lives, in all godliness and honesty.*

4. How happy are the people of God in their communion with him, and his thoughts of peace toward them! There was a way to the throne of grace in Babylon, as well as in Jerusalem. We have all access to God by prayer. Let us value this privilege, remembering the qualifications of acceptable devotion; that it is seeking God, and searching for him with our whole heart, that is, with sincerity and fervency. His thoughts toward his people *are thoughts of peace*, even when he sees it best to correct them, and though they may imagine that they are thoughts of evil. There is an end which they expect, even their settlement in the heavenly Canaan, and everlasting rest there; and of this they shall not be disappointed. But those who, like Shemaiah, rebel against God, forfeit the privileges of his people. God will do his people much good; more than they can ask or think: but those who are rebellious against his word and commandments shall never see it. *The end of the righteous is peace;* but *there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

CHAP. XXX.

Contains gracious promises of God to Israel, and that he would remember the covenant made with their fathers.

1 THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
2 Thus speaketh the Lord GOD of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book; *because they refer to distant events, viz. to the return of the Jews from captivity, and even to Christ's time; they will be encouragements to them in the mean while, and the events will be a proof of*

3 *my foreknowledge and providence.* For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they *shall* possess it.

4 And these [are] the words that the LORD spake concerning
5 Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD: We have heard the voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace, *as*
6 *the false prophets foretold.* Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see, *not one or two, but* every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness; *they carry concern in*
7 *their looks, and uneasiness in their behaviour.* Alas! for that day, *the day of the destruction of the city and temple, and the captivity of the residue of the people,* [is] great, so that none [is] like it: it [is] even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall
8 be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, *that distant period of signal and providential events,* saith the LORD of hosts, [that] I will break his yoke, *the king of Babylon's yoke,* from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him, *that is, of thy possessions and*
9 *labours:* But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them; *they shall adhere faithfully to true religion, and serve the Messiah, here called David, because he was his son according to the flesh, the heir to his throne, and in whom the prophecies relating to David were fulfilled.*

10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make [him] afraid; *thou shalt enjoy great quietness under the*
11 *Persian monarchy, and still more in the latter day.* For I [am] with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations, *of the Assyrians and Chaldeans,* whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee:* *but* I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished; *though I chastise, I will not utterly destroy thee.*
12 For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise [is] incurable, [and] thy wound [is] grievous; *it seems to be so, and is so, by human pow-*
13 *er.* [There is] none to plead, *or judge,* thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines, *but art*
14 *like a distempered body, dying for want of help.* All thy lovers, *or allies,* have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; [because] thy sins were increased; *I have treated thee with great*

* This was remarkably fulfilled in the Jews being kept a distinct people, when these nations, once so populous and mighty, were quite lost.

15 *severity because thine iniquities are great.* Why criest thou for thine affliction? *why dost thou lament and expostulate with me?* thy sorrow [is] incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: [because] thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto
16 thee. Therefore, *or rather, yet surely,* all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a
17 spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an outcast, [saying,] This [is] Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

18 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, *alluding to their formerly dwelling in tents,* and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, *or hill,* and the palace shall remain
19 after the manner thereof, *that is, the temple, God's palace, shall be reestablished upon its former plan.* And out of them, *the temple and private houses,* shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry, *that is, cheerfulness and thankfulness:* and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also
20 glorify them, and they shall not be small, *or brought low.* Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me; *their children shall inherit their fathers' honours and estates, the church and the commonwealth shall be restored as before,** and I will punish all that oppress them.
21 And their nobles, *or, noble One, that is, the Messiah,*† shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; *they shall have no foreign governor, but approach to God, consult him, and be judged by his law:* for who [is] this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD; *without God's favourable interposition who could do so?*
22 And ye shall be my people *again, and adhere to my instituted worship,* and I will be your God, *to protect and bless you. Yet in the mean time,*

23 Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked *who will not repent, and it shall be a continual whirl-*
24 *wind, not like a common one, which is violent but short.* The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done [it,] and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it; *when there shall be a general conversion of the Jews, then they shall fully understand the meaning of such prophecies as these.*

* Some understand it of their children being taken into covenant with God by baptism, on their conversion, as they formerly were by circumcision.

† The word signifies, the mighty One, and seems rather to refer to Christ, who should draw near to God as a priest, as well as a king. Then follows a note of admiration, It is wonderful it should be so! Who is so entirely devoted to my service, and can approach to me as mediator, but He?

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is both our duty and happiness to serve the Lord. To acknowledge God as our creator, preserver, and happiness; and, by his appointment, to serve Jesus Christ, to whom he hath given the throne of David! We are to reverence and honour him as a king; to submit to his laws, and trust in his protection: and our deliverance from the power of spiritual enemies, is an unanswerable reason why we should serve him in holiness and righteousness all our days.

2. See the unreasonableness of anxious fear in God's servants, even when their circumstances are most distressing, *v.* 10. Israel is rebuked for their fears, (though they were punished with severity, and their wound seemed incurable) because they had so many promises to trust in. Under pressing dangers, or long and heavy affliction, we are ready to despair; but God hath promised support and relief: and he is able to grant them, when earthly helps fail, and when, to human appearance, there is no hope. Our afflictions will have an happy issue; let us then *trust in the Lord for ever.*

3. Let us rejoice in the mediation of Jesus Christ, our great high priest: he is not only our governor, but our intercessor also: he draws near to God on our behalf; God has appointed and caused him to do so, that we might have strong consolation: he engaged his own heart to do it; voluntarily and resolutely undertook this service. As we hope for the benefit of his mediation, let us engage our hearts likewise; and while in his name we come boldly to the throne of grace, let us approach it with seriousness, reverence, and godly fear.

CHAP. XXXI. 1—26.

In this chapter gracious promises to Israel are continued; but it is hard to say, whether they refer to their return from captivity, or to gospel times: perhaps the former part of the chapter may refer to their return from Babylon, and the latter to their conversion in the last days.

1 AT the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.
2 Thus saith the LORD, The people [which were] left of the sword *of Pharaoh*, found grace in the wilderness; [even] Israel, when I went to cause him to rest; *I led them through the wilderness, and conducted them to their rest in Canaan, how*
3 *therefore can they doubt of my favour?* The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying,] Yea, I have loved thee *Israel* with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee; *what I did for thy fathers was founded on covenant love,*

4 *therefore I will continue to be gracious to thee.* Again I will
build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel; *I will
restore thee to thy former state, and thou shalt be reformed from
idolatry, and become pure again like a virgin:* thou shalt again be
adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of
them that make merry; *thou shalt have all marks of civil and*
5 *religious joy.* Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains
of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat [them] as
common things; *their vines shall yield such plenty of fruit that*
6 *every one may eat of it without restriction.** For there shall be a
day, [that] the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim, *which
was near Samaria, where there used to be the greatest opposition
to the worship at Jerusalem,* shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up
to Zion unto the LORD our God; *an allusion to centinels or watch-
men calling the people together on particular occasions, especially at*
7 *festivals.*† For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for
Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations, *when ye see
the beginning of deliverance:* publish ye, praise ye, and say, O
LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel; *complete this good
work; or rather, Thou hast saved them, and we praise thee for*
8 *thy faithfulness.* Behold, I will bring them from the north coun-
try, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, [and] with
them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her
that travaileth with child together; *those that are least able to
travel shall be inclined and enabled to come:* a great company
9 shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with
supplications will I lead them; *godly sorrow for past sins shall
mingle itself with all their joy:* I will cause them to walk by the
rivers of waters, in a straight way, wherein they shall not stum-
ble; *I will provide for them, and protect them in their journey:*
for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim [is] my firstborn, *and*
10 *I will restore them to their former state.* Hear the word of the
LORD, O ye nations, and declare [it] in the isles afar off, and
say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as
11 a shepherd [doth] his flock. For the LORD hath redeemed Ja-
cob, and ransomed him from the hand of [him that was] stronger
12 than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of
Zion, and shall flow together *in great multitudes, like the streams
of a river,* to the goodness of the LORD, *to share in the good
things of the Lord, in the common supplies of life,* for wheat, and
for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the
herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; *the influences
of divine grace shall complete their joy;* and they shall not
sorrow any more at all; *they shall have no such trouble again for*
13 *a long time, as they have lately experienced.* Then shall the vir-

* There was a law, that when a vine was planted the fruit should not be touched for three years, the produce of the fourth was consecrated to God, and in the fifth it might be eaten as a common thing.

† This is customary still among the Turks, where the priests proclaim from the tops of their churches, that the hour of prayer is come.

gin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: *for I* will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow; *all ages and ranks shall agree in*
14 *signs of universal joy.* And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, *they shall have plenty of sacrifices and offerings,* and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD; *both the priests and the people shall rejoice in the abundance of divine blessings.*

15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, [and] bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they [were]
16 not.* Thus saith he LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work, *thy tender concern for thy children,* shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall
17 come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, *or, to thy posterity,* saith the LORD, that [thy] children shall come again to their own border.

18 I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself [thus;] Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, *I received instruction,* as a bullock unaccustomed [to the yoke:] *or rather, though I was before as a bullock that would not bear it:* turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou [art] the LORD my God; *I need*
19 *thy gracious influence to bring me to a better temper.* Surely after that I was turned, *and felt the influence of thy grace,* I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon [my] thigh, *expressed great grief and humiliation:* I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth, *the burden of my former sins. To this penitent language*
20 *God graciously replies,* [Is] Ephraim my dear son? *or, Is he not my dear son?* [is he] *not* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, *by threatenings and judgments,* I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD; *I retain my former parental kindness, and will certainly deliver and bless him.*

21 Set thee up way marks, make thee high heaps, *that is, tall poles, finger posts, or pillars for direction, to make their way plain;* set thine heart toward the highway, [even] the way [which] thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

22 How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter, *fluctuating between doubt and hope?* for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man; *or, a woman shall put to the rout a strong man;*† *that is, God will give the Israelites extraordinary strength, so that, though weak as wo-*

* At the time of the captivity there was an assembly of the enemy at Ramah. *ch.* xl. 1. the captives were brought thither, and from thence carried to Babylon; and as Rachel was buried near that place, the prophet, by an elegant figure, represents her as looking out of her grave and bewailing the captivity of her descendants. This is applied and accommodated in the New Testament to the slaughter of the infants in this neighbourhood. See *Matt.* ii. 17, 18.

† Dr. Blayney.

men, they shall be able to resist and overcome all opposition.
23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet, *or, hereafter*, they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, [and] mountain of holiness; *they shall become a reformed, upright, and honourable*
24 *people.* And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they [that] go forth with
25 flocks; *the countries and cities shall be inhabited.* For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul; *I will comfort them under their sorrows, and supply them*
26 *with all good. The next are the prophet's own words.* Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me; *these things God revealed to me in a vision; I awaked, reflected upon them, and found them very comfortable to my soul; I was much refreshed with these gracious intimations of deliverance.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here taught, that it is good in times of trouble to look back to former instances of God's care and kindness. The Israelites in their captivity are directed to consider what God had done for their fathers, to prevent them from being disheartened by the difficulties that were in the way of their return. Thus should we think how often God hath supported his church and interest, and particular saints in times of distress; how often we have found grace, even when in the wilderness, and been drawn by his loving kindness. Let this recollection and experience encourage our hope, that *he who hath delivered and doth deliver, will still deliver.*

2. When God has designs of mercy for a sinful people, he stirs up a spirit of penitence, prayer, and reformation. Thus it is foretold that the Israelites should *return with weeping and supplication*, and that Jerusalem should be called *The habitation of justice*, and *The mountain of holiness*: and we may hope for the continuance of divine favours, and the restoration of prosperity, if God's goodness dispose us to repentance, fill us with shame and sorrow for our iniquities; if we earnestly call upon his name, and *live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.*

3. The common bounties of Providence are to be enjoyed and acknowledged as the fruits of divine goodness. When our wheat, and wine, and flocks are increased, it becomes us to adore the goodness of God therein; to acknowledge it with seriousness at our meals; to flow together to the solemn assembly, and there sing his praises. Especially should we praise him for that divine influence which makes the souls of men *like a watered garden.* Thus shall we be satisfied with his goodness; taste his love in all our comforts; find them doubly pleasant; and be in little danger of abusing them.

4. Let us learn to moderate our sorrows for the death of *our p* ous friends and children, from the consideration of the favour Go intends for them. He is represented as comforting weeping Ra chel; assuring her that her children should return to their borders and that therefore she should not weep as though they were lost It becomes christians, on such occasions especially, *to weep as though they wept not*; for their work, the pious pains they have taken in the education of their children, or for the service of their other relatives, shall be rewarded. There is hope that they will return from the captivity of the grave, enter on the good land, and be blessed at the resurrection of the just.

5. Let us observe with pleasure and thankfulness the great mercy of God to a penitent people. There is scarcely a more affecting description of this in all the bible, than is given us in this passage concerning Ephraim. God represents himself as feeling and encouraging all the workings of paternal affection toward returning prodigals. He afflicts them only to instruct them, and bring them back to duty; and when they begin to relent, he relents, receives them as his dear children, and restores them to his favour. Nay, their very return is the effect of his gracious work in them. Let us hence learn, what our behaviour should be in times of affliction, and what abundant reason there is for hope, if, in the language of Ephraim, we sincerely say, *Turn thou us, and we shall be turned, for thou art the Lord our God.*

CHAP. XXXI. 27, to the end.

The former part of this chapter referred to the state of the Jews after their return from captivity; this, to their state in the latter day.

27 BEHOLD, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow
the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of
man, and with the seed of beast; *they shall become very populous*
28 *and fruitful.* And it shall come to pass, [that] like as I have
watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to
throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over
them, to build and to plant, saith the LORD; *every thing seemed*
to be against them before, but now every thing shall be for them;
God will appear in the whole course of his providence to favour
and bless them.
29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten
a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge; *they*
shall be no more punished for the iniquities of their ancestors, as
30 *they have formerly been for persisting in their idolatry.** But

* There may be a reference here to that imprecation of the Jews, *His blood be upon us and our children*, which lies upon them still; but when they are converted it shall be so no more.

every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of
32 Judah:* Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [that] I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, *that is, led them in the kindest, gentlest manner;* which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: *and have fulfilled my part*
33 *of the covenant relation:* But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, *not a new law, but the old law in its moral precepts and evangelical truths,* and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my
34 people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; *that is, mere human instruction shall not be the only, nor the chief way of teaching; they shall have plenty of religious advantages, and a clearer knowledge of God, by the instructions of the spirit; an extraordinary effusion of which they shall enjoy:* for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more; *I will thus teach them, because I will forgive them; they shall be brought into my covenant again; and, through the blood of Christ, their sins shall be forgiven, and all the tokens of my displeasure against them be removed.*

35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, [and] the ordinances of the moon, and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar;
36 The LORD of hosts [is] his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, [then] the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever; *that is, my covenant is as sure as the ordinances of heaven; the Jews shall always continue a distinct people, and when they are converted they shall never apostatise any more, but continue to the end of the*
37 *world faithful, holy, and obedient.* Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD; *though for their sins they deserve to be rejected, yet for their fathers' sake, and my covenant with them, they shall at last be restored.*

38 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of
39 the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.
40 And the whole valley of the dead bodies, *or Tophet,* and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the

* The apostle quotes this, *Heb.* viii. 8. as referring to gospel times.

corner of the horse gate toward the east, [shall be] holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE have great reason to rejoice in the gospel covenant, and the blessed purport of it. The covenant God would make with the Jews in the latter day, is no other than the christian covenant; for there will be no distinction between them and other christians in that day, except their settlement in their own land. This covenant then God makes with us; and every clause of it deserves our attention. He will write his laws upon our hearts, will enable us to understand them, and dispose us to conform to them, as a copy to the original: he will teach us by the clear discoveries of his gospel, and the labours of his ministers; and also by the influences of his Spirit: for the best interpreter of scripture, Jesus Christ, explains this promise, of immediate divine teaching. The great obstacle to divine illumination, sanctification, and comfort, is sin; it is therefore promised, that sin shall be pardoned. We have full assurance of this under the gospel. Let us rejoice and be thankful that we are under this covenant of grace; be ever mindful of it; heartily comply with the terms on which these blessings are promised; and earnestly pray that God would thus pardon, teach, sanctify, and save us.

2. From the continued providence of God in the support and government of the universe, we may assuredly argue, that his promises will be fulfilled. He lights up the sun and the moon; manages this wide, unmeasurable world; rules the sea; keeps every thing in its proper place, and every creature in its proper office; he can therefore do any and all of those wonderful things which he hath promised. He hath preserved the Jews a distinct people, notwithstanding the trouble and persecution they have every where met with; so that they are not lost among the nations; while whole communities that have enslaved and persecuted them, have been so. He has supported the world for the sake of the church, and for the execution of his purposes; therefore we may be sure that the Jews shall be restored, and the gospel spread over the earth. Let it be *our hearts' desire and prayer, that Israel may be saved*; and let us in the mean time *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful who hath promised.*

* This is a prophecy that Jerusalem should be rebuilt and sanctified, and that multitudes of the converted Jews should settle there, that they should enlarge the circumference of their temple and city, and that what was now polluted should become holy ground: but whether these expressions are literal, or only figurative, time alone can discover.

CHAP. XXXII.

In which we have an account of Jeremiah's imprisonment; his complaint to God; the prophecy of the captivity is confirmed; and the promise of a gracious return.

1 THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the
tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which [was] the
eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, *and one year before the de-*
2 *struction of Jerusalem.* For then the king of Babylon's army be-
sieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in
the court of the prison, which [was] in the king of Judah's
3 house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying,
Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD,
Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Baby-
lon, and he shall take it, *and so dishearten the people from defend-*
4 *ing it;* And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the
hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the
hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth
to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; *he shall see him*
5 *look with fierceness and indignation;* And he shall lead Zedeki-
ah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, *or his*
posterity, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans,
ye shall not prosper.
6 And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me,
7 saying, Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall
come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that [is] in Ana-
thoth, *which was three miles from Jerusalem, so that it was now in*
the power of the Chaldeans: for the right of redemption [is]
8 thine to buy [it.] So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in
the court of the prison, according to the word of the LORD, and
said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that [is] in Anathoth,
which [is] in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance
[is] thine, and the redemption [is] thine; buy [it] for thyself.
Then I knew that this [was] the word of the LORD, *and done by*
9 *his special direction.* And I bought the field of Hanameel my
uncle's son, that [was] in Anathoth, and weighed him the
money, [even] seventeen shekels of silver; *about forty shillings.*
10 And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed [it,] and took wit-
11 nesses, and weighed [him] the money in the balances. So I
took the evidence of the purchase, [both] that which was sealed
[according] to the law and custom, and [that which was] open;
the original and counterpart, or the deed of assignment that was
12 *sealed, and the certificate of the witnesses:* And I gave the evi-
dence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son
of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's [son,] and
in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the
purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.
13 14 And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the

LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days; *may be hid under ground for greater*
15 *security, and produced after the captivity.* For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.
16 Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto
17 Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD,* saying, Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, [and] there is nothing
18 too hard for thee: Thou showest loving kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the
19 LORD of hosts, [is] his name, Great in counsel, and mighty in work, *or execution:* for thine eyes [are] open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways,
20 and according to the fruit of his doings: Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, *which are remembered,* [even] unto this day, and in Israel, and among [other] men, *the nations round about,* and hast made thee a name, as at this day;
21 And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand,
22 and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror; And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to
23 give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing, *comparatively,* of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast
24 caused all this evil to come upon them: Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence; and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest [it.]
25 And thou hast said unto me, O Lord GOD, Buy thee the field for money; and take witnesses; for, *or although,* the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, *and therefore I have no prospect of enjoying it.*
26 27 Then came the word of LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I [am] the LORD, the God of all flesh: Is there any thing
28 too hard for me? *I can easily surmount all the difficulties thou foresest.* Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of
29 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it: And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings

* Jeremiah did as God commanded him, but he wanted to understand this mysterious providence; perhaps he thought that the threatening was revoked, and therefore prayed to God for an explanation.

unto other gods, *in the most often, audacious manner*, to provoke
30 me to anger. For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth; for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of
31 their hands, saith the LORD. For this city hath been to me [as] a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it, *from Solomon's time, when it was beautified and completed; then their idolatry began, and has continued* even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face; *there-*
32 *fore I will withdraw my protection from it*, Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah,
33 and inhabitants of Jerusalem. And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching [them,] yet they have not hearkened to re-
34 ceive instruction. But they set their abominations in the house,
35 which is called by my name, to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through [the fire] unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

36 And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, *in the language of despair*, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, *to be destroyed* by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pesti-
37 lence; Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will
38 cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and
39 I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, *a new heart, no more divided between God and idols*, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their
40 children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not
41 depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul; *with a true and lasting affec-*
42 *tion*. For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them; *I will be as faithful to my*
43 *promises as I have been to my threatenings*. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, [It is] desolate without
44 man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal [them,] and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the

cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and from the cites of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD; *they shall have such plenty of money, such a flourishing trade and husbandry, that they shall buy lands, not only about Jerusalem and other cities, but all over the country.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. FROM the circumstances of the prophet's purchase we may learn, that it is a matter of prudence and duty to be honest, punctual, and open in bargains and sales. To have them done by the best advice, before competent and sensible witnesses, and to keep the deeds safe. This is necessary for the peace and prosperity of purchasers and their posterity. It is much to be lamented that a most useful act for registering deeds was laid aside by the artifice of those who make a figure, without substance to support it; or who live by the failures of deeds, and the doubtfulness of titles. *A wise man guideth his affairs with discretion.*

2. It is very desirable to know the full meaning and extent of God's will; whether by his word or providence. It is our duty, like Jeremiah, implicitly to obey the divine commands, however made known to us. Yet we may humbly desire to know their meaning, as our obedience in that case will be more ready and cheerful; and therefore it becomes us to look to God by prayer, that he would show us what and why he requires of us. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.*

3. In the most gloomy prospects it is good to dwell on the divine perfections and promises; both to promote our reverence and patience, and encourage our hope. Jeremiah mentions those perfections of God in his prayer which have this tendency; and God himself, in his answer, reminds him of them. And this answer shows us, that he can retrieve national affairs, and revive the interests of his church when it is at the lowest ebb. He can likewise revive his work in our souls; for nothing is too hard for him. What he did for Israel, and what he hath promised to do for his people, are sufficient grounds for thankfulness and cheerful expectation.

4. A change of heart and life, are necessary to the acquisition of the divine favour and acceptance. When God promises the Jews a happy return to and prosperity in their land, he promises to *give them one heart, and to put his fear within them.* And thus must our hearts be one; entirely devoted to God; and not divided between him and the world, or any creature. Our obedience must be entire and hearty; and we must, in order to this, seek to God, that he would implant good dispositions and principles in us; and *unite our hearts to fear his name.* Then *he will do us good*, and that with all his heart and soul, and at length bless us with an inheritance in the heavenly country, *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

CHAP. XXXIII.

In which God promises the Jews a gracious return from captivity, a settled government, and, in due time, Christ the Branch of righteousness.

1 MOREOVER the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah
the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court
2 of the prison, saying, Thus saith the LORD the maker thereof,
of Zion and Jerusalem, the LORD that formed it, to establish *or*
3 *regulate* it; the LORD is his name; Call unto me, and I will
answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou
knowest not; *an expression of God's favour to the prophet and of his kindness to his people; as if he had said, I will make further discoveries of my kind intentions to Israel, not only in their return*
4 *from captivity, but in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom.* For
thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of
this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which
are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword; *that is, by engines and mattocks; (the next verse comes in as a parenthesis concerning the present state of Jerusalem, and the ruin coming upon it;)*
5 They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but [it is] to
fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine
anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid
my face from this city; *that is, those from the country that come to attack the besiegers, or the besieged themselves sallying out, will*
6 *only provoke them to do so much the more mischief.* Behold, I will
bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal
unto them the abundance of peace and truth; *or, I will grant their prayer for peace and truth; I will restore their captivity,*
7 *and heal their civil and spiritual disorders.* And I will cause the
captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will
8 build them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all
their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will
pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and where-
by they have transgressed against me; *I will remit the punish-*
9 *ment of their iniquities.* And it shall be to me a name of joy, a
praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which
shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear
and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that
I procure unto it; *they shall be struck with religious awe, and give glory to me for what I have done for them.*
10 Thus saith the LORD; Again there shall be heard in this
place, which ye say [shall be] desolate, without man, and with-
out beast, [even] in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Je-
rusalem, that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant,
11 and without beast, The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness,
the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice
of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts; for the LORD

[is] good; for his mercy [endureth] for ever: [and] of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD: *there shall be common and religious joy in their families and in their temple; all which was fulfilled in Ezra's time.*

12 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing [their] flocks
13 to lie down. In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth [them,] saith the LORD; *who counteth them, as they go in or come out of the fold. Then follows a prophecy of Christ, and the*
14 *continuance of the gospel.* Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute
16 judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this [is the name] wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness; *the church shall be called by the name of Christ, as it is the seat of his residence, as the righteousness of its members is derived from him, and they are dedicated to him.*

17 For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to
18 sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually; *Christ shall reign as a king, and be a priest for ever.*

19 And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying,
20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day
21 and night in their season; [Then] may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers; *that is, God will always have those who shall preach,*
22 *profess and adorn the gospel.* As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, *the spiritual seed, the people of Christ,* and the Levites that minister unto me.

23 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,
24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, *(referring to their enemies deriding, or to the Jews despairing,)* saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, *Israel and Judah,* he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them; *as if they*
25 *were never like to be a nation again.* Thus saith the LORD; If

my covenant [be] not with day and night, [and if] I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, *day and night,*
26 *summer and winter;* Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, [so] that I will not take [any] of his seed [to be] rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them: *the christian church shall never cease to the end of the world.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE visits of God to his people are sufficient to make any place and circumstance comfortable, *v.* 2, 3. God came to Jeremiah with very gracious promises. He had before complained bitterly indeed of his grievous messages, when he had peace and liberty; here he hath comfortable ones, while confined. God can thus visit his people, and often does, when confined and afflicted; and makes their secret chambers delightful. None of their enemies can debar them from his visits. If we desire his gracious presence with us in seasons of trouble, we must earnestly pray for it, *v.* 3, and then we may hope that *as our tribulations abound, our consolations in Christ will much more abound.*

2. We here see the happy effects of divine discoveries and favours, *v.* 6. Thus God mercifully deals with diseased souls; reveals to them those important doctrines which are truth, and imparts that peace, which Christ has procured for them by his sufferings and grace; he heals their spiritual maladies, and restores their comfort and cheerfulness. Let us study *the truth as it is in Jesus; receive it with meekness and love;* labour to be in a state of peace with God; and preserve our minds in a state of serenity. This will be the best antidote against the evils of life, and the surest foundation of true pleasure and lively hope.

3. Let us bless God for these promises; rejoice that they have hitherto been fulfilled; and depend upon the further accomplishment of them. We have seen the gospel spread to this day, amidst persecutions, enemies, and corruptions; we have seen a succession of christian ministers, amidst all their discouragements; and are, as christians, the seed of David, that is, of Christ the son of David. Still is God maintaining his cause; stirring up the spirit of some to devote themselves to the service of the sanctuary, and raising up in our families a seed to serve him. This, if we are christians indeed, we cannot but behold with pleasure and thankfulness: and as surely as day and night, summer and winter, continue to succeed each other, so surely shall this be the case with the church to the end of the world. Let us rejoice in our relation to that church, whose name is *The Lord our righteousness;* consulting its interests to the utmost of our power, and endeavouring to be a name, a praise, and an honour to the Lord, *who hath purchased us to himself with his own blood.*

CHAP. XXXIV.

While Jerusalem was besieged, the Egyptians came to help Zedekiah, and the Chaldeans drew off to fight the Egyptians; during this time the events related in this chapter happened.

1 THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD,
when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army,
and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the
people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities
2 thereof, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Go
and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith
the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king
3 of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire: And thou shalt not
escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered
into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king
of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, *in a*
4 *stern angry manner*, and thou shalt go to Babylon. Yet hear the
word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith the
5 LORD of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword: [But] thou
shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the
former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn
[odours] for thee; and they will lament thee, [saying,] Ah
lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD; *thou*
shalt die a natural death, and receive the usual marks of respect
6 *which are paid to kings at their decease.* Then Jeremiah the
prophet spake all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in
7 Jerusalem, *(for which he was imprisoned, chap.* xxxii.) When
the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and
against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish,
and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the
cities of Judah.

8 [This is] the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD,
after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the
people which [were] at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto
them, *when he thought judgments were coming he began a refor-*
9 *mation according to the law in Exodus* xxi. 2; That every man
should let his man servant, and every man his maid servant,
[being] an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should
serve himself of them, [to wit,] of a Jew his brother, *though sold*
10 *either to pay their debts, or by the judges for their crimes.* Now
when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into
the covenant, heard that every one should let his man servant,
and every one his maid servant, go free, that none should serve
themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let [them]
11 go. But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and
the handmaids whom they had let go free, to return, and brought
them into subjection for servants and for handmaids; *when the*

siege was raised for a while, they laid hold of them, and brought them into bondage again; which was worse than if they had never let them go free.

12 Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the
13 LORD, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen,
14 saying, At the end of seven years, *or within the term of seven years*, let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. *This law, and that concerning the sabbatical year, have been neglected for several ages.*
15 And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my
16 name: But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he hath set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.
17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. *A remarkable contrast! Ye have not given liberty to your brethren and neighbours, therefore I will give the sword, the pestilence, and the famine, full commission and liberty to attack you without control; and ye shall be slaves among strangers and*
18 *enemies.* And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain,
19 and passed between the parts thereof, The princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the
20 calf;* I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the
21 beasts of the earth. And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes, will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of
22 Babylon's army, which are gone up from you. Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.

* Here is an allusion to their manner of making covenants; they killed a calf, and before it was laid on the altar, the covenanting parties walked between the parts of it, and so made a kind of imprecation, that God would so cut them asunder if they broke the covenant: this was a common custom among the heathen, and as old as Abraham's time. See Gen. xv. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

1. OBSERVE a remarkable instance of the goodness and severity of God, in the case of Zedekiah. He was not one of the worst of their kings; but by his disobedience to God, and treachery to the king of Babylon, to whom he swore allegiance, he was dethroned, carried captive, and had his eyes put out. Yet he lived in honour at Babylon, died in peace, and was buried with royal pomp. Thus judgment and mercy were mingled together: God punished his disobedience and falsehood; yet showed him some favour on account of his freedom from some of the vices of his predecessors. God will not suffer disobedience and treachery to go unpunished; nor any degree of virtue and obedience to go unrewarded.

2. It may be useful to bind ourselves by solemn engagements to our duty. Thus the Jews did, when they were informed what the law of God was concerning the release of their servants. The covenant was solemnly made and ratified in the house and presence of God; and attended with imprecations of his wrath if they brake it. It may be serviceable to us to bind ourselves by solemn vows to what is our duty; and often to remind ourselves of them, and of the authority, omniscience, and power of God; and thus to keep up a due apprehension of his wrath in case of disobedience; and all is little enough to fix our unsteady minds, and keep them firm to his commands. But we learn also,

3. That if we break our vows to God, he will severely punish it. What could be more vile and infamous than the conduct of this people to their servants! It was not only an injury to them, but a high affront to God, and a contempt of his law. They, as it is here said, *polluted his name, and brought a reproach upon his religion*; and therefore he gave them over to all kind of calamities. This is too often the case with the vows men make in the time of sickness and trouble; they promise, and perhaps begin to reform; but when the trouble is over, their good resolutions are gone; they repent of their repentance, and become as bad, yea worse than before. But *be not deceived, God is not mocked*; dissembled repentance, and partial reformation, are highly provoking to him; and therefore only adding deceit and treachery to other sins. In this case God will repent of the good he intended us, and make our punishment more remarkable and dreadful. *When thou hast vowed a vow, defer not to pay it.*

CHAP. XXXV.

Jeremiah is here ordered to go to the Rechabites, who on the approach of the Chaldeans took refuge in Jerusalem, and to try their obedience to the command of their father by offering them wine to drink: which they refused: hence occasion is taken to upbraid the Jews with their disobedience to the commands of God; and a blessing is pronounced on the Rechabites.

1 THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in
the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah,*
2 saying, Go unto the house of the Rechabites,† and speak unto
them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of
the chambers, and give them wine to drink, *which Jonadab had*
3 *forbidden them. See v.* 8. Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Je-
remiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons,
4 and the whole house of the Rechabites; And I brought them
into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of
Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which [was] by the
chamber of the princes, which [was] above the chamber of
Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door, *and*
near the place where the sanhedrim or council was held, to make the
5 *affair more public and solemn:* And I set before the sons
of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups,
6 and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will
drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father com-
manded us, *about three hundred years before this time,* (2 *Kings* x.
15.) saying, Ye shall drink no wine, [neither] ye, nor your sons
7 for ever: Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant
vineyard, nor have [any:] but all your days ye shall dwell in
tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye [be]
8 strangers.‡ Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the
son of Rechab, our father, in all that he hath charged us, to
drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our
9 daughters; Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have
10 we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: but we have dwelt in tents,
and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our
11 father commanded us. But it came to pass, when Nebuchad-
rezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said,
Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the

* This was in his fourth year, when Jerusalem was besieged, and many captives taken, and in which Daniel and his companions were carried to Babylon.

† These people were a branch of the family of the Kenites, descended from Moses's father in law Hobab. In *Judges* i. 16. we read of Jonadab the son of Rechab, who was a man of considerable eminence, and whom Jehu took with him into his chariot to witness his zeal for the honour of God.

‡ The design of this command was, that they should live quietly among the Israelites, and not be envied or ill used, as they might have been had they been tradesmen or husbandmen; it might also be intended to preserve them from the temptations of luxury and intemperance, and the contagion of ill examples; and that in troublesome times they might more easily get away. Accordingly they were never incorporated with the Jews, nor circumcised, but lived among them as friends, and worshipped the true God.

Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians :* so we dwell at Jerusalem ; *being obliged for our own security to break through this rule in part, and take shelter in this city.*

12 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,
13 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; Go and tell the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *Will ye not* receive instruction to hearken to my words ? saith the LORD.
14 The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed ; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment : notwithstanding I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking ;
15 but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending [them,] saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers : but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me ; *they have showed greater regard to a man, than you have*
16 *done to God.* Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them ; but this people hath not hearkened unto me :
17 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, the God of Israel ; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil that I have pronounced against them : because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard ; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.
18 And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts the God of Israel ; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath com-
19 manded you : Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever ; *that is, they shall continue to be a people a long time : or perhaps the meaning may be, none of them shall be slain in the assault upon the city ; according to the marginal reading, there shall not a man be cut off from Jonadab the son of Rechab to stand before me for ever.*†

REFLECTIONS.

1. OBSERVE how acceptable to God, obedience and subjection to parents are. A reverence for the memory of a pious ancestor led these people to observe his ordinances ; and God put a mark of honour upon them. How reasonable is it then, for children and young people to obey their parents, when they require

* Nebuchadnezzar, having conquered the Syrians, recruited his army with them, and brought them on this expedition.

† In 1 *Chron.* ii. 55, we find, that some of them returned with the Jews after the captivity, and so had the privilege of worshipping at God's temple.

of them nothing but what is an evident and important duty? Let the solicitude which these people showed to keep up the customs of their ancestors, lead us to be concerned to keep up the entail of religion and the worship of God in our families, from generation to generation; remembering, that strict sobriety and moderation to this world, are the best means of preserving it: whereas pride and luxury are its bane and ruin. When young persons grow ashamed of the simplicity and the employments of their ancestors, and are aspiring to a higher rank and place in life, they too often lose the religion of their ancestors; and though they become more esteemed in the sight of men, are an abomination in the sight of God, and lose the greatest glory of the family.

2. How much more reasonable and important is it to obey the commands of God! How forcible was the argument used in this chapter to the Jews? Jonadab was but a man, and had been long dead; but God was their father and master, almighty, and eternal. He never tied them up to such severities as were enjoined upon the Rechabites. His favours to the Jews were incomparably greater than Jonadab's to his children; and he had reminded them of his commands and favours, by many prophets and for many succeeding years. How absurd and monstrous is it for young persons, though dutiful and affectionate to earthly parents, to forget God! to cast off fear, and restrain prayer before him! to be tractable and respectful to men, but disobedient and rebellious to God! Let us fear God our father in heaven; and *keep his commandments, for they are not grievous; and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

3. What special obligations are christians under, to celebrate the death of Christ at his table. The Rechabites thought the will of a dying ancestor sufficiently binding, and they fulfilled it for many generations. How inexcusable then are those christians, who will not fulfil the dying command of a Saviour, in showing forth his death till he come? That Saviour to whom they profess subjection, and owe all their privileges and hopes? His authority and love should engage their obedience; and to refuse it, is such ingratitude and inconsistency, as may justly fill them with shame, and alarm their fears: while those who punctually, regularly, and seriously fulfil their master's will, and act consistently, may cheerfully expect his great and eternal salvation.

CHAP. XXXVI.

In which Baruch writeth and publicly reads Jeremiah's prophecy; Jehoiakim, hearing of this, orders the roll to be fetched, and burns it; upon which Jeremiah denounces judgment against him; and Baruch writes a new copy.

1 AND it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, [that] this word came unto

2 Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, *or, a scroll of parchment rolled upon a stick,** and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day; *write a*
3 *summary of those things thou hast delivered from time to time.* It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.†
4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD,
5 which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I [am] shut up: I cannot go into the house of the LORD; *that is, I am a prisoner; or*
6 *rather, I am forbid to go thither:* Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD's house upon the fasting day, *the day of atonement:* and also thou shalt read them
7 in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great [is] the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.
8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of
9 the LORD in the LORD's house. And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, [that] they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem; *perhaps for the removal*
10 *of that drought mentioned, chap.* xiv. 1, 2. Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD,‡ in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house, in the ears of all the people; *probably out of some window or balcony, that the people in the courts of the temple might the better hear him.*
11 When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan,
12 had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD, Then he went down into the king's house into the scribe's chamber; and, lo, all the princes sat there, [even] Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hana-
13 niah, and all the princes. Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in

* These were the books then in use; this may account for the transposition of the chapters in this prophecy, which were probably written on many separate scrolls.

† This was a proper means to effect this end, and would leave them inexcusable; though God knew that in fact they would not hearken.

‡ This was near a year after the former command; he had probably been reading it to select companies all this time.

14 the ears of the people.* Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi
the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi,
unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou
hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the
son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.
15 And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears.
16 So Baruch read [it] in their ears. Now it came to pass, when
they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and an-
other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of
all these words: *impressed with the predictions and threatenings,*
they resolved to tell them the king, as they could do nothing without
17 *him.* And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst
18 thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch answer-
ed them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his
19 mouth, and I wrote [them] with ink in the book. Then said the
princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah, and let
no man know where ye be; *thinking that the book would provoke*
the king, and having a regard for Jeremiah and Baruch, they ad-
vised them to hide themselves.
20 And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up
the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the
21 words in the ears of the king. So the king sent Jehudi to fetch
the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber.
And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all
22 the princes which stood beside the king. Now the king sat in the
winter house, in the ninth month: and [there was a fire] on
23 the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, [that]
when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, *or rather, columns or*
paragraphs, that he cut it with the penknife, and cast [it] into
the fire that [was] on the hearth, until all the roll was consum-
ed in the fire that [was] on the hearth; *a high affront to God, and*
a declaration that he despised his precepts, and defied his threaten-
24 *ings.* Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, [nei-
ther] the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words,
as they ought to have done, and as Josiah did in the like case. In
verse sixteenth it is said they were afraid; but, being under the
influence of the king, they began to think as he did, at least to show
25 *no fear before him.* Nevertheless, Elnathan and Delaiah and Ge-
mariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn
26 the roll: but he would not hear them. But the king command-
ed Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of
Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the
scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them; *God*
so ordered matters that they were not discovered.
27 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the
king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at
28 the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, Take thee again another roll,

* Michaiah seems to have done this from a good principle, as his father had lent Baruch the chamber to read out of; he went to the secretaries' office, and told them of it; they perhaps being too busy to attend the temple service on a fast day.

and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll,
29 which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and
30 beast? *intimating that this was the substance of the whole.* Therefore, thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to
31 the frost.* And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.

32 Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added beside unto them many like words.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here shown the end for which the scriptures were written, and ministers preach, *v.* 3—7. It was by divine appointment that the scriptures were written; and they are to be publicly read and explained, to engage men *to consider, and repent of their evil ways.* It is a great encouragement to repentance that God will forgive their iniquity; though without it he will not. For this end ministers are to preach the word: and if, as in the case before us, they repeat the same sentiments, exhortations, or even discourses, it may be useful, that they may be better known, considered and remembered. They have a divine pattern for so doing; and perhaps, those curious hearers, who are most ready to complain of it, need it most. The end of preaching is so important, that there is need of line upon line, and precept upon precept, to save men from sin and destruction.

2. How vain are all the outward shows of piety, while the power of it is wanting! These sinful people proclaimed a fast, while they went on in their trespasses. These courtiers showed some reverence to the word of God at first, some respect to the prophet and his secretary: but the good impressions quickly wore off. When they saw how light the king made of the threatenings, they began to think there was nothing in them; they contented themselves with asking impertinent questions about the manner of writing the

* Which Josephus says was the case. There is a great difference between that climate and ours; a river there is sometimes frozen over in a night, when the preceding day is very hot.

prophet's sermons, while they were not wrought upon by the sermons themselves. So easily do men deceive themselves in the most weighty matters. How careful should we be that we hear, consider, and obey the commands of the Lord, and tremble at his word.

3. How lamentable is the obstinacy of sinners when it leads them to despise the word of God. What horrible insolence was the king guilty of in burning Jeremiah's prophecy! What impatience under reproof! What an affront to God! He showed a steady determination not to comply with the command, and expressed an impudent defiance of the threatening: thus he hardened his own heart, and set a bad example to his courtiers and people. But observe how the chapter concludes: the same words were written in another book, and *there were added unto them many like words.* Men may burn the bible, but not one tittle of it shall fall to the ground. Its threatenings stand in full force, and shall all be executed upon the disobedient; who only prepare heavier judgments for themselves, by their contempt of God's word and commandments: for it is as true of its threatenings, as of its promises, that *the word of God liveth and abideth for ever.*

CHAP. XXXVII.

The Egyptians having raised the Chaldean siege, Zedekiah sends to Jeremiah, who prophesies the return of the Chaldeans, and their victory; upon which he is beaten and put into prison.

1 AND king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, *in the room of*
2 *his nephew, and had taken of him an oath of homage.* But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet
3 Jeremiah. And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God
4 for us. Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the peo-
5 ple: for they had not put him into prison. Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they *raised the siege and* departed from Jerusalem.*

* Zedekiah had broken his league with the king of Babylon, and entered into an alliance with the king of Egypt, and the Egyptians came to help him; upon this the Chaldeans left Jerusalem, and went to face the Egyptians; in which having succeeded, they came again to the siege.

6 Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah,
7 saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall
ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to inquire of
me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you,
8 shall return to Egypt into their own land. And the Chaldeans
shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and
9 burn it with fire. Thus saith the LORD; Deceive not your-
selves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for
10 they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole
army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remain-
ed [but] wounded men among them, [yet] should they rise up
every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire; *God will
find instruments to execute his purposes, and he can make the most
unlikely successful.*

11 And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans
was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army,
12 Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land
of Benjamin, *to Anathoth, where his estate lay,* to separate him-
self thence in the midst of the people; *perceiving that he could
do no good in the city, he thought it best to retire with the people
13 who were going to look to their affairs in the country.* And when
he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward [was]
there, whose name [was] Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son
of Hananiah *the false prophet, whose death Jeremiah had foretold,*
and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to
the Chaldeans; *thou art going to them in person, to encourage
them, because thou hast foretold their taking the city, and hast ex-
14 horted the king and people to submit.* Then said Jeremiah, [It
is] false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened
not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the
15 princes, *to the chief officers of state.* Wherefore the princes
were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, *that is, scourged him,*
and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for
they had made that the prison.

16 When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the
cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days, *till the siege
17 began again;* Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out:
and the king asked him secretly in his house, *for fear of the
princes,* and said, Is there [any] word from the LORD? And Jer-
emiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into
18 the hand of the king of Babylon. Moreover Jeremiah said
unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or
against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put
19 me in prison? Where [are] now your prophets which prophesi-
ed unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come
against you; nor against this land? *you see the siege is renewed,*
20 *and the city in danger.* Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O
my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted
before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of

21 Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.* Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison, *where he had more liberty and free air.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. SEE how absurd it is for persons to desire the prayers of ministers, when they will not regard their exhortations. So Zedekiah did; and this is too common a case in times of distress: men are then glad of the prayers of their friends and ministers, whom they before slighted; they are desirous to receive consolation from those, from whom they never would receive advice. But there is little reason to hope for any success from such prayers; and ministers have no consolation to administer to the disobedient; for they must still say, as God says, *There is no peace to the wicked.*

2. The delay and suspension of divine judgments, too often harden sinners in their evil ways. While the Chaldeans besieged Jerusalem, there were some signs of remorse among the people; when they retired the Israelites grew bad again. This is often the case with sinners; *because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed*, when judgments are at a distance, *they go on to do wickedly.* When God afflicts them, they entertain some serious thoughts and good resolutions; but when the affliction is gone, their goodness is gone too; and they return to folly again. Thus they deceive themselves. But the determination of God is peremptory, that *except men repent, they shall perish.*

3. See the power of God over all creatures, *v.* 10. He is the supreme commander of all armies, and can do what he pleases with them. He is never at a loss for instruments; they may be weak and unlikely, but they shall execute his purposes. Whether we hope for nothing from them, or fear nothing from them, if God directs them they shall prosper. Without him, *vain is the help of man:* with him, sufficient is the power of the weakest. How much more reasonable then is it to fear him, than any human power? The principal reflection is,

4. How wretched is the state of a sinner, who is always contending with his own conscience. There is something strangely unaccountable in the conduct of Zedekiah. He had seen the death of his brother, and the captivity of his nephew and sister, exactly answering the divine prediction by Jeremiah. He began his reign

* It was a remarkable instance of the prophet's courage and faithfulness, that he delivered this message when he had a petition to present for himself, which would have been more likely to have succeeded had he delivered a more favourable one; especially to upbraid Zedekiah with his false prophets. When he spoke in God's name, he was bold as a lion; but when he petitioned for himself, nothing can be more modest, decent, and respectful than his request.

with these awful objects in view; he saw God's judgments on others, and felt them himself; yet he continued unhumbled. Sometimes he was under strong convictions; then infatuated by his evil counsellors. Sometimes he desired Jeremiah's prayers; then he consented to put him in prison; then sent for him to know what the Lord said; and yet rejected his commands. This is the case with many now: they show some reverence to God's ministers, and attend upon ordinances, yet continue unaffected and unsanctified: often uneasy in their own minds; sometimes full of alarms and fears; then settle in a false peace. *The wicked are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest.* If we desire to be easy and happy, let us reverence the word of God, hearken to the voice of his ministers; and *keep a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man.*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

In which is related Jeremiah's confinement in the dungeon; Ebedmelech's success in getting it mitigated; and his counsel to the king.

1 THEN Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the
son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pa-
shur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had
spoken, *or, had used to speak unto the people, and which he still repeated privately in the court of the prison,* unto all the people,
2 saying, Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city
shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:
but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall
3 have his life for a prey, and shall live. Thus saith the LORD,
This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Bab-
4 ylon's army, which shall take it. Therefore the princes said
unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death:
for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain
in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such
words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of this
people, but the hurt, *by making the people despair of success.*
5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he [is] in your hand;
for the king [is] not [he that] can do [any] thing against you:
his hands are so weakened that he dares not oppose you, especially
6 *at this critical time.* Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him
into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, *or, of the king,* that [was] in the court of the prison: and they let down
Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon [there was] no wa-
ter, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.*

* Josephus says, up to his neck.

7 Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs
which was in the king's house, *one of his officers, who was a proselyte*, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the
king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin, *where he heard causes;*
8 Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the
9 king *with great courage*, saying, My lord the king, *as the hand of God is so awfully against us*, these men have done evil in all that
they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast
into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place
where he is: for [there is] no more bread in the city, *and we*
10 *are all in danger of dying by famine as well as he.* Then the
king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from
hence thirty men with thee *to assist, if any should oppose thee*,
and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he
11 die. So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the
house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast
clouts, *or clothes*, and old rotten rags, and let them down by
cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah, *that the cords might not hurt him; which they probably had done before, being let down*
12 *roughly.* And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah,
Put now [these] old cast clouts, and rotten rags under thine
13 arm holes, under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. So they
drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the
dungeon; and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.
14 Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet
unto him into the third entry that [is] in the house of the LORD;
into a private room in the third gate between the king's house and the temple: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a
15 thing; hide nothing from me. Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare [it] unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to
death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?
or, Wilt thou not put me to death, though I give thee such counsel as
16 *thou wilt not like to hear.* So Zedekiah the king sware secretly
unto Jeremiah, saying, [As] the LORD liveth, that made us this
soul, *and on whose preservation thy life and mine depend*, I will not
put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these
men that seek thy life; *not promising to take his advice, but only*
17 *that he would not put him to death.* Then said Jeremiah unto
Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of
Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, *and treat with them*, then thy soul shall live, and
this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and
18 thine house: But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the
Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt
19 not escape out of their hand. And Zedekiah the king said unto
Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, *those who according to thy directions have surrendered themselves; I am terribly afraid*, lest they deliver me into their hand,

and they mock me. *This was very unlikely, as they knew it to be the Lord's command that he should do so: or if they should mock him, the dread of that was no sufficient reason for his disobedience.*
20 But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver [thee:] Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so
21 it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. But if thou refuse to go forth, this [is] the word that the LORD hath showed
22 me: And, Behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house [shall be] brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those [women] shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee; *even the women shall mock thee for thy folly and obstinacy, (which will be worse than if men should do it) when they see thee blind and captive; and upbraid thee with thy folly in hearkening to evil counsellors, who prevailed with thee to thy ruin; and they shall be the first to forsake thee and go to the Chaldeans:* thy feet are sunk in the mire, *thou art fallen into difficulties out of which thou knowest not how to escape,* [and] they are turned away back; *thy friends have forsaken*
23 *thee and left thee destitute.* So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.
24 Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of
25 these words, and thou shalt not die. But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death;
26 also what the king said unto thee: Then shalt thou say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would
27 not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded; *which no doubt was true, as he had asked this favour; so that he told the truth, though not the whole truth, which he was not obliged to do.* So they left off speaking with
28 him; for the matter was not perceived. So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was [there] when Jerusalem was taken.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see how the characters of good and useful men may be misrepresented. Jeremiah is described as a person that was seeking the hurt of the city, while he was its best friend, and sought its good above any one else, as he would have brought them to God, to duty, and to happiness. The king had a kindness for him, but was so base and cowardly that he would not publicly avow it. It is no marvel if the best men are still repre-

sented as enemies to the state, and to public peace. The reason is, that men love to go on in their sins, and are displeased with every one who would reform them, or make them uneasy in their wicked practices.

2. God can raise up friends for his people where they least expect it. Who would have thought of Jeremiah's finding a friend at court? and that an Ethiopian proselyte; while the Israelites persecuted him. This friend acted with great zeal and courage, dealt plainly with the king, and ventured his place and head to save the prophet. Thus can God at any time, and in any place, raise up friends to his servants, and deliver them out of their troubles.

3. How absurd and impious is it to disobey God, from a fear of being mocked or bantered by men. How meanly and ridiculously did Zedekiah act, in being more afraid of the jests of a few of his subjects, than of the displeasure of the Almighty. This fear goes a great way with many persons now, especially with the young: they are disposed to do their duty, and to be firm in it; but they are afraid their acquaintance should laugh at them. These fears are often groundless; and there is, as in the case of Zedekiah, a secret reverence for those who are good in such as will not imitate them. How weak and childish a spirit is that, which cannot bear to be laughed at, rather than give up faith and a good conscience. Such, as the prophet tells Zedekiah, will be worse laughed at hereafter: wicked men and devils will severely mock them, for loving the praise of men more than the praise of God.

4. Amidst our greatest zeal for God and religion, we ought prudently to consult our own welfare. While we are harmless as doves, as to giving offence, and bold as lions in the cause of God, we ought to be wise as serpents. This affair was prudently concerted between the king and the prophet; there was no lie nor equivocation. He spoke the truth, but not the whole truth; and this he was not obliged to tell. It is wrong to expose ourselves to danger, when no good can be answered by it. We should *walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.*

CHAP. XXXIX.

In which we have an account of Jerusalem being taken; of Zedekiah being made blind, and sent to Babylon; of the city being ruined, and the people taken captive.

1 IN the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his
2 army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. [And] in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth [day] of the month, the city was broken up; *after two years siege a*

3 *breach was made, and the city was taken by storm.* And all the
princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle
gate, [even] Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris,
Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of
the king of Babylon.

4 And it came to pass, [that] when Zedekiah the king of Judah
saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth
out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the
gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the
5 plain. But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and over-
took Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had
taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, *which lay to the north
of Jerusalem, and where he waited to hear of the success of the siege,*
where he gave judgment upon him; *that is, called a council, by
which Zedekiah was condemned as a rebellious subject, and a trai-*
6 *tor to the king of Babylon, he having violated his oath.* Then
the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah be-
fore his eyes; *who must have been young, as Zedekiah was but
thirty two years old:* also the king of Babylon slew all the no-
7 bles of Judah *that were taken prisoners.* Moreover he put out
Zedekiah's eyes; *he first slew his children, and then put out his
eyes, that no other object might thrust out the idea of that bloody
scene;* and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon,
*where he had time to reflect on his guilt in bringing these calamities
on his friends and himself by his obstinacy.*

8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses
of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

9 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away cap-
tive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in
the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, *who took Jere-
miah's advice and surrendered,* with the rest of the people that
10 remained. But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of
the poor of the people, which had nothing in the land of Judah,
and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time, *that the
land might not grow quite wild and be overrun by beasts.*

11 Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, gave charge concern-
ing Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying,
12 Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do
unto him even as he shall say unto thee: *having been informed,
by some who had gone over to the Chaldeans of what Jeremiah had
foretold, what he had advised Zedekiah to do, and what he had suf-*
13 *fered on these accounts.* So Nebuzaradan the captain of the
guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rabsaris, and Nergalsharezer,
14 Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's princes; Even they sent,
and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed
him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, that
he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people;
and thus, while the false prophets were destroyed by those judg-

ments which they said would never come, Jeremiah was secured from those which he foretold would actually come.

15 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he
16 was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be [accom-
17 plished] in that day before thee; *or, in thy sight.* But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD; and thou shalt not be
18 given into the hand of the men of whom thou [art] afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD; *having delivered my prophet, from good principles and with great courage, this act of kindness shall preserve thy life. No doubt the Chaldeans heard of this, and were thereby inclined to spare Ebedmelech amidst the general desolation.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE here see how punctual and awful God is in fulfilling his threatenings. Zedekiah and his princes would not believe them, because the false prophets had deceived them; but at length the direful judgment came, and the word was fulfilled in all its terrors. So sinners promise themselves impunity, and harden their hearts; but God will bring his words upon them *for evil, and not for good.* An awful standing lesson of the evil of sin, and a caution to us that we do not make light of it.

2. See how ill men judge of the value of earthly things. Amidst the calamities of Judah, the rich men were driven from their fine houses and large estates, and the poor, who had nothing, were put into possession of them. The rich, who had been cruel oppressors, were carried captive; and the poor of the land, who had been oppressed, were now possessed of large estates, and lived in plenty. The poor perhaps had envied the rich, and the rich despised the poor; but the condition of the poor proved to be most eligible. Such surprizing revolutions are often seen in the course of providence, and therefore it becomes us *to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and toweep as though we wept not,* since nothing below is certain and stable.

3. We see that God can secure his servants amidst general desolations. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he can make even his enemies to be at peace with him.* The prophet found better usage among enemies and heathens, than among his own countrymen, the princes, nobles, and priests of Israel. Thus *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of their tribulation, and reserves the unjust to be punished.* So will it be in the future judgment: while the wicked are overwhelmed with speedy destruction, God will take care of his servants; and give his angels charge to look well to them: for

the day cometh that shall burn like an oven, and the proud shall be destroyed; but God's servants shall be his *in the day when he maketh up his jewels.*

4. God remembers and will reward the favour and kindness shown to any of his servants, especially his ministers. Ebedmelech delivered Jeremiah; who was therefore sent to him with a comfortable assurance of protection in the day of evil. Because he had acted kindly to the prophet, and did it upon good principles; not from mere humanity, but from regard to God, knowing that he was doing right, and trusting in God to prosper and defend him; therefore God would deal kindly by him, and put it into the hearts of the Chaldeans to protect him. God will still be pleased with the favour shown to his ministers and people; and they who show it, and trust in him, *mercy shall compass them about. God is not unrighteous to forget any work and labour of love* that is done to his saints.

CHAP. XL, XLI.

Jeremiah being set free by Nebuzaradan, goes to Gedaliah; the dispersed Jews come to him; and Johanan informs him of Ishmael's conspiracy.

1 THE word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramath, when he had taken him, being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Ju-
2 dah, [which were] carried away captive to Babylon.* And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The
3 LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. Now the LORD hath brought [it,] and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed
4 his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you. And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which [were] upon thine hand: if it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee; *I will set mine eye upon thee for good; promising to be his friend, and to treat him in a respectful manner:* but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land [is] before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go,
5 thither go. Now while he was not yet gone back, *while Jeremiah was hesitating*, [he said,] go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, *a worthy, honourable character, a person of rank, whose grandfather and father were ministers of state to Josiah, and whose father saved thee, and* whom the king

* This refers to the forty second chapter, where he warns the people left in the land; and the story before us is to illustrate that prophecy. Jeremiah had been set free, but was taken captive by some of the Chaldeans who did not know him, and was carried to Ramah; but the captain of the guard set him free again.

of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people: or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave
6 him victuals and a reward, and let him go. Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.
7 Now when all the captains of the forces which [were] in the fields, [even] they and their men *who had fled*, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not car-
8 ried away captive to Babylon; Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the
9 son of a Maachathite, they and their men. And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan sware unto them and to their men, *assured them of his protection*, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon,
10 and it shall be well with you. As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us; *that is, to send the tribute and to receive orders:* but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put [them] in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken: *while you remain tributary to the king of Babylon you may enjoy the fruits of*
11 *the land.* Likewise when all the Jews that [were] in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that [were] in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahi-
12 kam the son of Shaphan; Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much.
13 Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,
14 And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? *out of a personal pique to thee, or hatred to the Jews; hoping to bring more to his dominions, or make those that remained his vassals.* But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed
15 them not. Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know [it:] wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant of Judah
16 perish? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael; *he is an honest man, and I cannot believe the report.*

1 CHAP. XLI. Now it came to pass in the seventh *month*, [that] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah, *where he made a splendid entertainment for them;* and there they did eat
2 bread together in Mizpah. Then, *valuing himself on his royal extraction, and envying Gedaliah,* arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over
3 the land. Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, [even] with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, *that is, Gedaliah's guards,* and the Chaldeans that were found there, [and] the men of war, *all*
4 *that opposed him.* And it came to pass the second day after he
5 had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew [it,] That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, [even] fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring [them] to the house of the LORD; *that is, some pious men of the ten tribes came in mourning habits to weep over the ruins of Jerusalem, and to offer incense, if they could find an*
6 *altar and a priest.* And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went, *as if he sympathised with them:* and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam;
7 *wanting to see how they stood affected to him.* And it was [so] when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, [and cast them] into the midst of the
8 pit, he, and the men that [were] with him. But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey, *which we will give thee; thinking to influence his covetousness, if not his compassion.* So he forbare, and slew them
9 not among their brethren. Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, [was] it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: [and] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah
10 filled it with [them that were] slain. Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that [were] in Mizpah, [even] the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites; *as had been concerted between him and the king of the Ammonites.*

11 But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] with him, heard of all the evil that Ish-
12 mael the son of Nethaniah had done, Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and

13 found him by the great waters that [are] in Gibeon. Now it
came to pass, [that] when all the people which [were] with Ish-
mael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the
forces that [were] with him, then they were glad; *hoping to be*
14 *recovered and taken back.* So all the people that Ishmael had
carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and
15 went unto Johanan the son of Kareah. But Ishmael the son of
Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, *only two of*
the assassins being probably slain, and went to the Ammonites.
16 Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of
the forces that [were] with him, all the remnant of the people
whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah,
from Mizpah, after [that] he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahi-
kam, [even] mighty men of war, and the women, and the chil-
dren, and the eunuchs whom he had brought again from Gibe-
17 on: And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham,
which is by Bethlehem, *an estate which David had given to Chim-*
ham the son of Barzillai, and which was called by his name, to go
18 to enter into Egypt, Because of the Chaldeans; *that is, in or-*
der to proceed to Egypt out of the reach of the Chaldeans: for
they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah
had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Bab-
ylon made governor in the land; *they were fearful it would be*
imputed to them all as a revolt; a groundless fear; for though
the king of Babylon might have resented the murder of his viceroy,
he would rather have applauded and rewarded Johanan, for slaying
the murderers and recovering the captives.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THOSE who are most honest and friendly, and mean the best, have need of prudence and discretion. It was wise in Gedaliah not to entertain jealousy of his subjects; but very unwise not to be more upon his guard, after he had been warned of Ishmael's design. A proper medium is to be observed between hastily crediting and hastily rejecting or despising reports of injuries intended us. We should be cautious whom we trust; and while we show the courage of an honest heart, we should be upon our guard that we be not deceived by pretended friendship.

2. Observe here the dismal consequences of pride and ambition, and what dreadful evils they occasion in society. Ishmael treacherously slew Gedaliah, because he thought, that being of the seed royal, he had a better claim to the government; and when once he was engaged in this bloody work, he slew those honest Israelites, because they were the friends of Gedaliah, though he had nothing to fear from them: and this cruelty he exercised upon his brethren and countrymen, who were all companions in the general affliction of the nation. Such monsters, such demons, do ambition and malice turn men into: and we have need to pray earnestly, that God

would restrain this ambitious spirit in our land, which seems otherwise likely to blast our hopeful prospects, and hurry us into ruin.

3. See the uncertainty of human affairs, and how little the continuance of earthly blessings is to be depended upon. The poor Jews that were left in the land, began to think themselves happy in such a governor as Gedaliah, and probably would have been so: but he was treacherously slain; and then all their expectations were disappointed, and there was nothing but confusion again. Thus may God soon disappoint our most pleasing expectations; and bring upon us fresh troubles, while we are rejoicing in the restoration of peace. Let us therefore maintain a constant sense of the uncertainty of earthly comforts; and be solicitous to secure *a kingdom that cannot be moved; an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

CHAP. XLII, XLIII.

Johanan and the remnant of the people desire Jeremiah to ask counsel of God what they should do; the prophet assures them of safety in Judea, but of destruction in Egypt: Nevertheless the leading men carry the people there; and the prophet foretells the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar.

1 THEN all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son
of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the
2 people from the least even unto the greatest, came near, And
said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD
thy God, [even] for all this remnant; (for we are left [but] a
3 few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:) That the LORD thy
God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing
that we may do: *nothing could be more proper, humble, and re-*
4 *spectful, than this address, had it been honest.* Then Jeremiah
the prophet said unto them, I have heard [you;] behold, *I will*
pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it
shall come to pass, [that] whatsoever thing the LORD shall
answer you, I will declare [it] unto you; I will keep nothing
5 back from you. Then they said to Jeremiah; The LORD be
a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send
6 thee to us. Whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil, we
will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee;
that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD
our God.
7 And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD
came unto Jeremiah; *they were kept so long in suspense, to give*

them time to think. Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah,
and all the captains of the forces which [were] with him, and all
9 the people from the least even to the greatest, And said unto
them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye
10 sent me to present your supplication before him; If ye will still
abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull [you]
down, and I will plant you, and not pluck [you] up: for I repent
me of the evil that I have done unto you; *I will change my way
of dealing with you, and will no longer punish you, without fresh*
11 *provocations.* Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye
are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I [am]
12 with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. And I
will show mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you,
I will incline him to show you favour, and cause you to return to
your own land; *to your own cities and possessions, from whence*
13 *ye were driven by the late distractions.* But if ye say, We will
not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your
14 God, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where
we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have
15 hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: And now therefore
hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah, Thus saith
the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your
faces to enter into Egypt, *if you are fully and obstinately resolved*
16 *to leave your own country,* and go to sojourn there; Then it shall
come to pass, [that] the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake
you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were
afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye
17 shall die. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces
to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword,
by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall
remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.
18 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine
anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants
of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when
ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an
astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach: and ye shall see this
place no more.
19 The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah;
Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished
you this day; *I have testified against your leaving your land, es-
pecially against your going to Egypt, because it is an idolatrous*
20 *country, and at enmity with the king of Babylon.* For ye dissem-
bled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God,
saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according
unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us,
21 and we will do [it.] And [now] I have this day declared [it] to
you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God,
22 nor any [thing] for the which he hath sent me unto you. Now
therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the

famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go [and] to sojourn.

1 CHAP. XLIII. And it came to pass, [that] when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, [even] all these words, *(a strong expression, denoting the authority of God's word, and their great wickedness and*
2 *obstinacy in acting contrary to it ;)* Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely : the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn
3 there : But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might
4 put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.* So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in
5 the land of Judah. But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to
6 dwell in the land of Judah ; [Even] men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Ba-
7 ruch the son of Neriah. So they came into the land of Egypt : for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD : thus came they [even] to Tahpanhes.

8 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpan-
9 hes, saying, Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick kiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, *or, in the way that leads to it*, in the sight
10 of the men of Judah ; And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid ; and he shall
11 spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh he shall smite the land of Egypt *with pestilence*, [and deliver] such [as are] for death to death ; *shutting them up in infected places ;* and such [as are] for captivity to captivity ; and such [as are]
12 for the sword to the sword. And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt ; and he shall burn them and carry them away captives : and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt as a shepherd putteth on his garment ; *beautifully alluding to the ease with which he should make the conquest ; just as a shepherd slips on his garment ; soon, and without care or nicety ;* and he shall go forth from thence in peace ; *without*

* What strange, inconsistent conduct was this ! They knew him to be a prophet, and that his words had been fulfilled ; yea, they set him on to inquire of the Lord, and promised obedience. Had he and Baruch chosen to go to Babylon, they might have gone when the captain solicited them. It was therefore an idle and absurd suggestion.

13 *opposition, and without fear.* He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that [is] in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire; *though an idolater himself, he shall destroy their idols; and though a worshipper of the sun, he shall break its images and burn its temples.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE resolution expressed in *v.* 5. is very proper for us to make when we read or hear the word of God, viz. to do what he requires of us, whether agreeable or disagreeable, whether fashionable or unfashionable; whatever pains, labour, or self denial it may cost us. This is the way to have things well with us. And in order to confirm this resolution, it will be proper to make it in the presence of God, and with an appeal to him, as a true and faithful witness.

2. We have here a deplorable instance of the gross hypocrisy which men are sometimes guilty of in their transactions with God and his ministers. The people came respectfully to the prophet to inquire the will of God; resolving to do it, and appealing to God for their sincerity; and yet they were determined not to obey if it was disagreeable to them. Thus many pretend respect to ministers, come and sit before them as God's own people, and profess obedience and submission; till the word comes to cross their inclinations and worldly interests; then they will not obey; but like these hypocrites, begin to find fault with the word itself, or the preachers of it. They will desire their prayers, but reject their exhortations. This is horrible prevarication both with God and man; and the portion of such hypocrites will be peculiarly dreadful.

3. God will bring upon sinners the evils which they think to escape by indirect means. These men wanted to go to Egypt that they might escape the sword and famine: and God threatens, *v.* 22. to destroy them in the land where they desire to sojourn, by sword, famine, and pestilence. It is impossible to outrun the judgments of God. Men now bring themselves into poverty and contempt by dishonest methods of increasing their substance; or a fretful, impatient disposition, leads them to change their situation, their business, or their connections, to avoid something that disturbs them; but wherever they go, crosses will attend them, because they carry with them their own irregular passions. The way to be happy, is to take pains to mend our bad tempers, and make God our friend. With a humble, patient, devout spirit, we may be comfortable any where; without such a disposition we shall be comfortable no where.

4. Observe with what infinite ease God can transfer the possession of the greatest kingdoms. He calls Nebuchadrezzar *his servant*, because he was to execute his pleasure; foretells that he should destroy Egypt, that ancient, rich, and populous kingdom;

describes the very spot of ground where he should pitch his tent; and the ease and security with which he should make the conquest. Let us reverence this glorious Being, who doth according to his will, and fear that Power, which no creature can resist.

CHAP. XLIV.

Jeremiah in this chapter reproves the Jews in Egypt for continuing in idolatry, after the exemplary judgments inflicted on their nation for that sin; and, upon their refusing to reform, denounces destruction to them, and to the kingdom wherein they sought protection.

1 THE word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of
2 Pathros, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day
3 they [are] a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein, Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, [and] to serve other gods, whom they knew not, [neither] they, ye, nor your
4 fathers. Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending [them,] saying, Oh, do not this abom-
5 inable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto
6 other gods. Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted [and] desolate, as at this
7 day. Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye [this] great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suck-
8 ling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth; *having learned the idolatry of the Egyptians, and practised that, beside the idolatry you were used to practise in your own land;*
9 *on which account God is determined to destroy you.* Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; *perhaps referring to Solomon's wives in particular, especially his Egyptian wives, who had enticed him to idolatry; though*
10 *not to them alone. (v. 15.)* They are not humbled [even]

unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers.

11 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all
12 Judah. And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, [and] fall in the land of Egypt; they shall [even] be consumed by the sword [and] by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, 13 [and] an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach. For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:
14 So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there, *being uneasy in Egypt, and wishing to return:* for, *or, whereas* none shall return but such as shall escape; *that is, only the few who were carried with the rest against their will, as Jeremiah and Baruch, &c. some of them or their seed may return after the captivity.*

15 Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of
16 Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, [As for] the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD,
17 we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for [then,] *before the Chaldean invasion,** had we plenty of vict-
18 uals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, *that is, to the moon, (an idolatry chiefly practised by the women)* we have wanted all [things,] and have been
19 consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? *without the knowledge and consent of our husbands?*

20 Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him [that]
21 answer, saying, The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the

* This was a direct falsehood; many of them having been destroyed, and others carried captive before that event.

LORD remember them, and came it [not] into his mind, *a very*
22 *offensive to him?* So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, [and] because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant,
23 as at this day. Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this
24 day. Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that [are] in the
25 land of Egypt: Thus saith the LORD of hosts the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.
26 Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth; *you say you will perform your vows, and think they are, though unlawful in themselves, an obligation upon you to do so; therefore I will fulfil mine; as I have vowed your utter destruction, so it shall come to pass; ye shall lose all your re-*
27 *ligion, and be given up to utter apostacy and ruin.* Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the
28 sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them. Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose word shall stand, mine, or theirs.
29 And this [shall be] a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words
30 shall surely stand against you for evil: Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt, *or, Apries, from whom they hoped for protection*, into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon his enemy, and that sought his life.*

* Accordingly soon after this he was conquered and slain in his own palace by Amasis his rival. *Herodotus*, b. ii. ch. 169.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us seriously consider and reflect upon the view here given us of sin, *v.* 4. Every transgression of the law of God is odious and abominable in its own nature, and highly displeasing to God; he hates it, and will punish it. From a tender concern for the happiness of men he dissuades them from it; saying, *Oh, do it not.* We should learn from hence how we ought to think and speak of sin; what fools they are, and how unlike God, who make a jest of it. This should be a motive to us to hate it with a perfect hatred; and also with great seriousness and earnestness to warn others against it.

2. God's judgments upon others are intended for our warning, *v.* 2—6. He expostulates with this rebellious people; Have you not seen what your brethren and country have suffered? It was an aggravation of their guilt that they were not impressed and reformed thereby. The judgments of God upon other nations and persons, are intended to awaken us; to engage us to a holy fear and caution; lest partaking of their sins, we should also partake of their plagues.

3. See what a false judgment men often make of their prosperity. These people argued, that because all was well with them while they practised idolatry, therefore their idolatry was the cause of their prosperity. Thus sinners argue; because they enjoy health, ease, and plenty, God is not displeased with their sins. This shows great ignorance of God, of his word, and of a future state; and is a great abuse of his goodness; which was designed to lead them to repentance. But their arguings are false in fact, as well as those of the Jews: for the uneasiness of their spirits, which they cannot always prevent, and the forebodings of future wrath, which they cannot always stifle, show that sin is not the way to happiness, and that God is angry with them.

4. See the sad progress and dreadful consequences of disobedience. These impudent sinners before they left Judea showed some respect to the prophet and to God's word, and promised to hearken to it; but they grew worse and worse, and now tell the prophet, plainly and flatly, that *they would not hear:* God might say what he would, and they would do what they would. This is the language of every wilful sinner; the genuine language of a carnal rebellious heart. But God has sworn by his great name that he will destroy such rebels. They say they shall have peace, and escape damnation; God says they shall not; and a little time will show whose word shall stand, God's or theirs. May God deliver us all from hardness of heart, and a contempt of his word and commandments.

CHAP. XLV, XLVI, 1—13.

This chapter refers to the thirty sixth, and should have been placed after it. Baruch having written and read Jeremiah's prophecy, the king, being displeased, sent a warrant to apprehend both of them.

1 THE word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch
the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a
book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim
2 the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD,
3 the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch; Thou didst say, Wo
is me now; for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; *per-
sonal troubles to the sorrows I endure on account of the public;* I
4 fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest. Thus shalt thou
say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, [that] which I
have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I
will pluck up, even this whole land; *I will ruin this whole coun-*
5 *try, which hath formerly been so beautiful and fruitful.* And
seekest thou great things for thyself? seek [them] not; *do not
indulge the secret ambition of thy heart:* for, behold, I will bring
evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD, *upon all ranks and ages:* but
thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither
thou goest; *thou shalt escape with thy life, and let that content
thee; thou hast reason to rejoice in that, as a conqueror when he
divideth the spoil.*

1 CHAP. XLVI.* The word of the LORD which came to
2 Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; Against Egypt,
against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was
by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar
king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son
3 of Josiah king of Judah. Order ye the buckler and shield, and
draw near to battle; *go, take up your arms, and march against the*
4 *Chaldeans; speaking ironically.* Harness the horses; and get
up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with [your] helmets; furbish
the spears, [and] put on the brigandines, *or, coats of mail.*
5 Wherefore have I seen them dismayed [and] turned away
back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled
apace, and look not back: [for] fear [was] round about, saith
6 the LORD. Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man
escape; *or, the swift shall not fly away, but be taken;* they shall
stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates.
Then, in order to raise an expectation of some mighty enterprise,
7 *the prophet asks,* Who [is] this [that] cometh up as a flood,
8 whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a

* The first verse of this chapter is an introduction to the prophecies in it and the following ones. In the beginning of this Jeremiah foretells the overthrow of Pharaoh's army at Euphrates, when he went against Nebuchadnezzar, in the first year of his reign.

flood, and [his] waters are moved like the rivers; *a beautiful allusion to the overflowing of the Nile, which made Egypt fruitful;* and he saith, I will go up, [and] will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof; *he threatens to bear*
9 *down all before him, and to destroy every opposing city.* Come up, ye horses; and rage ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians that handle [and] bend the bow; *the inhabitants of Africa, the neighbours and allies of the*
10 *Egyptians.* For this [is] the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates; *representing their destruction as a sacrifice of justice to the Lord.*
11 Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines? [for] thou shalt not be cured; *the Egyptians shall never recover themselves after this*
12 *defeat.* The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, [and] they are fallen both together; *they are destroyed by one another in the haste of their flight. Accordingly we read in* 2 *Kings* xxiv. 7. *the king of Egypt came no more out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt.*

REFLECTION.

THE practical instructions to be drawn from this prophecy against Egypt, will be more properly introduced under the latter part of the chapter. We shall therefore at present observe what may be learned from chapter xlv. namely, 'that we should restrain a spirit of ambition at all times, especially in times of public trouble.' Baruch was afraid he should lose his favour at court; he thought himself in the way of preferment, by being introduced to the king with Jeremiah's prophecies; but when he found that he was sought for to be punished, he began to grow fretful and uneasy. This God took notice of, and ordered Jeremiah to admonish him for it. God is witness to the secret thoughts of vanity that are in our hearts, and all the discontent and fretfulness which we express or feel when our schemes are disappointed, or likely to be so. God commanded Baruch, and he commands us, *not to seek great things for ourselves;* to be humble and content in our stations; and to maintain a temper suited to the dispensations of Providence. It is our unreasonable fondness for great things that makes us impatient under evil things, and less solicitous about good ones. Baruch's conduct is reproved from this consideration, that the nation would soon be ruined, and that therefore it was ridiculous to be painting his cabin when the ship was sinking. This intimates that the

uncertainty and short duration of earthly things, is a substantial reason why we should not set our hearts upon them. God will destroy this world; will break down its pillars, and pluck up its very foundations: let us therefore not seek great things in it, but the good things of piety and zeal. Let it be enough for us if our souls are given us for a prey, and we do not partake of the destruction that shall come upon the wicked; if we hear Christ say, *Well done, good and faithful servants:* these are great things indeed, and God allows us with a sacred refined ambition to seek them. May he grant that the frequent view and diligent pursuit of them, may swallow up every thing that would at any time interfere with them.

CHAP. XLVI. 13, to the end. CHAP. XLVII.

The prophecy in the preceding part of the chapter refers to the Egyptians being driven out of the country they possessed between Egypt and Babylon, which was fulfilled immediately: this refers to their being attacked and conquered in their own country by Nebuchadnezzar, after the Jews went thither, and many years after the former conquest. The same event is foretold by Ezekiel, ch. xxix.—xxxii. *The forty seventh chapter is a prophecy of the destruction of the Philistines.*

13 THE word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come [and]
14 smite the land of Egypt. Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph, and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about
15 thee. Why are thy valiant [men] swept away *as with a violent*
16 *rain?** they stood not, because the LORD did drive them. He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they, *their allies, and mercenary troops*, said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing
17 sword. They did cry there, *that is, the people who were set to guard the isthmus or neck of land which joins Asia to Africa, and which separated between Egypt and the conquered countries*, Pharaoh king of Egypt [is but] a noise; he hath passed the time appointed: *Pharaoh had promised what great things he would do, and with what a powerful force he would join them, but here they com-*
18 *plain it was all a bluster.* [As] I live, saith the King, whose name [is] the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor [is] among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, [so] shall he come; *that is, the king of Babylon shall come, and be as much superior to them, as Tabor and Carmel are higher than the neighbouring hills.*

* The word rendered *valiant men*, is in the Septuagint translated *Apis*, the sacred bull of Egypt; which, from a very ingenious criticism of *Dr. Kennicott*, appears to be the true rendering; and is probably alluded to in v. 20, 21.

19 O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into
captivity: for Noph shall be waste and desolate without an in-
20 habitant. Egypt [is like] a very fair heifer, *a rich and goodly kingdom; or perhaps here is an allusion to their god Apis, a fine spotted kine which they worshipped;* [but] destruction cometh;
21 it cometh out of the north. Also her hired men [are] in the midst of her like fatted bullocks; for they also are turned back, [and] are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, [and] the time of their visitation; *they are like oxen that make no resistance, though*
22 *their bulk and strength is so great.* The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; *the voices of the Egyptians, which were before loud and blustering, like the lowing of an ox, shall now become low and inconsiderable, like the hissing of a serpent, or the mutterings of an enchanter; (see Isaiah* xxix. 4.) for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood.
23 They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, *or locusts,* and [are] innumerable; *her cities and palaces, though many, strong, and populous, shall be plundered and destroyed, like*
24 *the cutting down of a wood.* The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people
25 of the north. The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, *Amon of No, or Thebes, where was the temple of Jupiter Amon, a city so large as to have a hundred gates,* and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh and [all] them that trust in him:
26 And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterwards it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD; *as it was in Cyrus's time, when some of the Egyptians might return, but they were never so considerable as before.*
27 But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel; for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make [him] afraid.
28 Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I [am] with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished; *a prophecy which has been most remarkably fulfilled. All the mighty nations that oppressed them are vanished as a dream, but the Jews are still preserved as a distinct people, and will be so till the promises of God shall be accomplished.*

1 CHAP. XLVII. The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh
2 smote Gaza; *while they were yet quiet and secure.* Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall

be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.
3 At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong [horses,] at the rushing of his chariots, [and at] the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to [their] children for feebleness of hands; *they shall seek their safety to the neglect of*
4 *their families, and scarcely be able to save themselves;* Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, [and] to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth; *the neighbours and allies of the Philistines:* for the LORD will spoil the
5 Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.* Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off [with] the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself? *that is, tear thy*
6 *hair, and wound thyself through grief and astonishment.* O thou sword of the LORD, how long [will it be] ere thou be quiet? put up thyself in thy scabbard, rest, and be still. *A beautiful and noble apostrophe, dictated by the prophet's desire of the peace of Israel's enemies, and his grief for their approaching calamities: emotions which he checked with this thought, that all was to exe-*
7 *cute the divine purposes.* How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it. *A prophecy which was fulfilled in the desolation of those countries, while Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Tyre; which was blocked up about thirteen years.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. HERE is another instance of the little dependence which is to be placed on the greatest of men, even when they promise and boast the greatest things. The allies of the Egyptians complained that Pharaoh was *but a noise.* He hectored and talked big, but that was all; and the helpers in whom the Tyrians and Sidonians trusted, were cut off. So uncertain are expectations from man! Those who promise and compliment most, often perform least: they may be unable or unwilling to fulfil their promises; or, if ever so able or willing, they may be speedily cut off. This should teach us to *cease from man;* to trust in a faithful God, and to seek our help from him.

2. Observe how changeable the state of nations is. A fine description is here given of the number, power, and pride of the Egyptians. What forces, what allies, and preparations! but all were vain against this mighty conqueror. The Philistines in like manner were secure and quiet: but such distress came upon them, that they could not save their children, or look back to see what was become of them. What little reason have we, as a nation, to

* A nation that joined with them, and was lost among them; they are mentioned together in *Gen.* x. 14.

be secure; or at any time to boast of our wisdom, strength, or safety. Let us *not be high minded, but fear.*

3. Observe the power of God over the nations and princes of the earth. When the prophet had described the Egyptian allies as saying, *Pharaoh is but a noise*, he adds, *v.* 18. *As I live, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts, so shall he come.* In all these lively descriptions of the preparations, the attack, the conquest, the pursuit, the plunder and destruction of Egypt, the hand of God is mentioned. He drave them, he punished them, he spoiled them: their slaughter was a sacrifice to his justice. War is his sword; he gives it a commission, whom it shall strike, how far it shall extend, and how long it shall continue; and it shall exactly fulfil its charge. It is very comfortable to think of this, amidst all the confusion that is in the earth; it shows how much reason and encouragement there is to pray, that the devouring sword may be sheathed; and to be thankful for our national blessings and prospects.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Contains the judgment of Moab for several corruptions, which was executed by Nebuchadnezzar's army while engaged in the siege of Tyre.

1 AGAINST Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Wo unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded [and] taken: Misgab is confounded and dismay-
2 ed. [There shall be] no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon, *its capital city*, they have devised evil against it; *that is, the Chaldeans, having taken it, shall devise evil there against the rest;* come and let us cut it off from [being] a nation. Also thou shalt
3 be cut down, O Madmen! the sword shall pursue thee. A voice of crying [shall be] from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.
4 Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be
5 heard. For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have
6 heard a cry of destruction. Flee, save your lives, *(this is what they shall say to one another,)* and be like the heath in the wilderness, *or, like a blasted tree in a solitary place.*
7 For because thou hast trusted in thy works, *or fortifications*, and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh *thy god, unable to deliver thee*, shall go forth into captivity [with]
8 his priests and his princes together. And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the LORD hath spoken;
9 *both cities and villages, farmers and shepherds, shall all be destroyed.* Give wings unto Moab, *without which it will be impossible*

to escape, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof
10 shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein. Cursed [be] he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed [be] he that keepeth back his sword from blood. *God had given the command to destroy Moab; he probably had signified his mind to Nebuchadnezzar by Jeremiah, whom he knew and owned to be a prophet.*

11 Moab hath been at ease from his youth, *that is, hath enjoyed many years of peace*, and he hath settled on his lees, *like wines kept long on their lees, to preserve their strength and flavour*; and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed; *he is as bad or worse than ever.*
12 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, *or tilters that shall tilt him down*, and shall empty his vessels, and
13 break their bottles. And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence.
14 How say ye, We [are] mighty and strong men for the war?
15 Moab is spoiled, and gone up [out of] her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King,
16 whose name [is] the LORD of hosts. The calamity of Moab [is]
17 near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, *that is, his fame and glory*, say, How is the strong staff broken, [and]
18 the beautiful rod! *all his authority, pride, and importance.* Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from [thy] glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, [and] he shall destroy thy strong holds; *thou shalt be left to the*
19 *mercy of the conquerors, and be exposed to hunger and thirst.* O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, [and] say, What is done? *there shall be such a terrible alarm, that both men and women shall fly*
20 *before the conqueror comes.* Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry: tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is
21 spoiled, And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon
22 Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, And upon Dibon,
23 and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim, And upon Kiria-
24 thaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon, And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozra, and upon all the cities of the land of
25 Moab, far or near. The horn, *that is, the power*, of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD; *an allusion to the horns of beasts, and the hands of men, wherewith they defend themselves.*
26 Make ye him drunken: for he magnified [himself] against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision; *he shall be brought into the greatest confu-*
27 *sion and disorder, and be bereaved of the aids of reason.* For was not Israel a derision unto thee? *what infamous thing was*

there in Israel, that should expose him so much to your contempt? was he found among thieves? *had he injured you, and been taken in the fact?* for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy; *or, that thou shouldst insult him with all the power of thy*
28 *words.* O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove [that] maketh her nest in the
29 sides of the hole's mouth. We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud, *this is their prevailing character,)* his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness
30 of his heart, *and how he hoped to see Israel quite extirpated.* I know his wrath, saith the LORD; *that is, his design to misrepresent Israel to the Chaldeans; or, the designs of the magicians and false prophets to deceive them;* but [it shall] not [be] so; his
31 lies shall not so effect [it.] Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab: [mine heart] shall mourn for
32 the men of Kirheres. O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach [even] to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage; *their being a country famous for vineyards, and the enemy invading them about the time of vintage, and destroying it, their cries on that account*
33 *shall be heard far and wide.* And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the wine presses: none shall tread
34 with shouting; [their] shouting [shall be] no shouting. From the cry of Heshbon [even] unto Elealeh, [and even] unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar [even] unto Horonaim, [as] an heifer of three years old *lowing after her calf:*
35 for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate. Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods.
36 Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres; *I look upon them with the utmost compassion:* because the riches [that]
37 he hath gotten are perished. For every head [shall be] bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands [shall be] cuttings,
38 and upon the loins sackcloth. [There shall be] lamentation generally upon all the house tops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel, wherein [is] no
39 pleasure, saith the LORD. They shall howl, [saying,] How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about
40 him. For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an
41 eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab. Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her
42 pangs. And Moab shall be destroyed from [being] a people,
43 because he hath magnified [himself] against the LORD. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, [shall be] upon thee, O inhabitant of

44 Moab, saith the LORD. He that fleeth from the fear, shall fall
into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken
in the snare: for I will bring upon it, [even] upon Moab,
45 the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. They that fled
stood under the shadow of Heshbon, because of the force *or fortifications of Heshbon, thinking they should be safe there:* but a
fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst
of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown
of the head of the tumultuous ones; *the Chaldeans shall take it,*
lay up their ammunition there, and destroy those turbulent creatures
46 *with which the country abounds.* Wo be unto thee, O Moab!
the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken cap-
tives, and thy daughters captives.
47 Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab, *some of them*
shall be restored in the latter days, saith the LORD; *which may*
refer to the conversion of the gentiles in gospel times. Thus far
[is] the judgment of Moab.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us attend to that awful denunciation, *v.* 10. *Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth his sword back from blood.* Though it be bloody work, yet God commanded it to be done upon those wicked people; who, to all their other crimes, added, what was peculiarly displeasing to him, rejoicing and insulting over the miseries of others, and of Israel in particular. We are not called out to such work as this: but only to such services as are reasonable and delightful. To do it deceitfully, or negligently, is not to do it to the purpose; or to pretend to do it out of regard to God, when our only aim is to serve our own interest; or without that life and zeal, which we ought to discover. The more excellent the work is to which we are called, the more awful will be the curse of doing it deceitfully. Let us therefore *be steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

2. See what danger there is in prosperity, *v.* 11. Moab, though so very wicked, enjoyed long prosperity, and that, by their abuse of it, helped to make them more so. This is too common in our day; *because men have no changes, they fear not God,* think they are as good as they need to be; or that God is not displeased with their sins. What little reason have we to be fond of prosperity, or to envy those who enjoy it! This shows us why God chooses an afflicted state for his people; and how reasonable it is in them to acquiesce in it.

3. See how odious pride is to God. This is particularly specified as the predominant sin in Moab, *v.* 29. it is several times mentioned in various expressions. It is a temper very hateful to God, especially when it shows itself in taking pleasure in the poverty or calamities of others. The whole of the chapter in this connection, confirms Solomon's observation, that *pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

CHAP. XLIX.

Contains a collection of prophecies against several of the neighbouring nations.

1 CONCERNING the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heirs? *are they quite extinct, doth not Judah still survive?* why [then] doth their king, *or, Milcom,* inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?
2 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah, *the chief city* of the Ammonites; and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters, *the lesser cities,* shall be burned with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, saith the LORD; *he shall take their possessions who have taken his; which was the case under the Maccabees.*
3 Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled: cry ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth; lament, and run to and fro by the hedges *to hide yourselves;* for their king, *that is, Milcom, their god,* shall go into captivity, [and] his
4 priests and his princes together. Wherefore gloriest thou in the vallies, thy flowing, *or fruitful* valley, O backsliding daughter, *(perhaps so called as being descended from Lot)* that trusted
5 in her treasures, [saying,] Who shall come unto me? Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts, from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man, right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandereth, *afford him shelter and habitation.*
6 And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD.
7 Concerning Edom, *or Idumea,* thus saith the LORD of hosts; [Is] wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished, *for which Edom was once so*
8 *famous?** Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, *in caverns, in which they should hide themselves,* O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time [that] I will
9 visit him. If grape gatherers come unto thee, would they not leave [some] gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will
10 destroy till they have enough, *they would leave something.* But I have made Esau bare, *this shall be an utter destruction,* I have uncovered his secret places, *where he hid his treasures,* and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, *the Moabites and Ammonites,* and
11 he [is] not; *there is none left to say,* Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve [them] alive: and let thy widows trust in me;
12 *though some understand this as God's word to his people.* For thus saith the LORD; Behold, they whose judgment [was] not to drink of the cup, have assuredly drunken; *that is, the Jews did so,*

* Job's friends came from this country.

who had not deserved it so much as the Edomites; and [art] thou
he [that] shalt altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go
13 unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink [of it.] For I have
sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a
desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities
14 thereof shall be perpetual wastes. I have heard a rumour from
the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, [saying,]
Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the
battle: *God by his secret influence shall gather them together, as*
15 *if he had sent an ambassador among them.* For, lo, I will make
16 thee small among the heathen, [and] despised among men. Thy
terribleness, *that is, thy secure situation,* hath deceived thee, [and]
the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the
rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldst
make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from
17 thence, saith the LORD. Also Edom shall be a desolation:
every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at
18 all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Go-
morrah, and the neighbour [cities] thereof, saith the LORD, no
man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.
19 Behold, he, *that is, Nebuchadnezzar,* shall come up like a lion
from the swelling of Jordan, against the habitation of the strong;
like a lion driven from its den among the thickets, when Jordan over-
flowed its banks, and thereby was rendered more fierce: but I will
suddenly make him run away from her, *or, run upon her:* and
who [is] a chosen [man, that] I may appoint over her; *or, I*
will give a charge to him that is a choice one (Nebuchadnezzar)
against her: for who [is] like me? and who will appoint me
the time? and who [is] that shepherd that will stand before me?
who will appoint a time to contend with me? he shall be no more
20 *able to do it than a shepherd to oppose an enraged lion.* There-
fore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against
Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the in-
habitants of Teman: surely the least of the flock shall draw
them out; *the least of the soldiers shall prevail against and de-*
stroy them: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with
21 them. The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry
the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea; *the neighbouring*
22 *country was astonished.* Behold, he shall come up and fly as the
eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall
the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman
in her pangs.
23 Concerning Damascus, *the capital of Syria,* Hamath is con-
founded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings; they
are faint hearted; [there is] sorrow on the sea; *as in a storm*
24 *at sea;* it cannot be quiet. Damascus is waxed feeble, [and]
turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on [her:] anguish
25 and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail. How is the

25 city of praise not left, the city of my joy!* Therefore her young
men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut
27 off in that day, saith the LORD of hosts. And I will kindle a
fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces
of Benhadad, *king of Syria*.

28 Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor,
which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith
the LORD; Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the
29 east; *that is, part of Arabia*. Their tents and their flocks shall
they take away; they shall take to themselves their curtains,
and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto
them, Fear [is] on every side; *there shall be a universal panick*.

30 Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor,
saith the LORD; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath tak-
en counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against
31 you. Arise, *ye Chaldeans*, get you up unto the wealthy nation,
that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither
gates nor bars, [which] dwell alone; *like shepherds in tents*.
32 And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their
cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them [that are]
in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all
33 sides thereof, saith the LORD. And Hazor shall be a dwelling
for dragons, [and] a desolation for ever; there shall no man
abide there, nor [any] son of man dwell in it; *its inhabitants, if
not slain, shall be totally driven out of their country*.

34 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against
Elam, *the Persians*, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah,
35 king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I
will break the bow of Elam, *famous for its archers*, the chief of
36 their might. And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from
the four quarters of heaven,† and will scatter them toward all
those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts
37 of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed
before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and
I will bring evil upon them, [even] my fierce anger, saith the
LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have con-
38 sumed them. And I will set my throne, *the throne of Nebuchad-
nezzar*, in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the
princes, saith the LORD.

39 But it shall come to pass in the latter days, [that] I will bring
again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD; *accordingly the Per-
sians were afterwards famous under Cyrus, conquered Babylon,
and became a powerful nation*.

* These are the words of the people, or of Jeremiah, who might have made a visit there, and been pleased with the place.

† They shall be invaded by many enemies, the Scythians and Chaldeans in particular, at the same time, as history informs us that they were.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are taught from hence, that God observes and resents the injustice of men to one another; as in the case of the Ammonites, who seized the land of the Jews, and for that reason were dispossessed of it again. He marks the injustice of those who defraud persons of their substance; or even their heirs, though they know it not, and cannot right themselves. Fraud in the least instances is displeasing to him; and he will punish them that deal deceitfully.

2. How absurd is it for those who forsake God, to glory in their possessions, like the Ammonites, *v.* 4. who had a fruitful country and great treasures, while they were refractory and wicked. Many thus boast of their families, their honours and wealth, and make these their confidence, while they are destitute of religion: but God will bring a fear and terror upon them, which all their abundance cannot silence.

3. The eleventh verse suggests a comfortable lesson to widows and orphans. It intimates, that though it is a blessing and comfort to heads of families to have relations and friends who will take care of their dependents, when they are dead and impoverished; yet that God will take care of them, provide for them, and preserve them; that is, if they serve the God of their fathers, and trust in him.

4. If God sees it good to afflict his people, what have not his enemies to fear! *v.* 12. His design is only to correct and improve *them;* and if his corrections are so painful, and their cup of affliction so bitter, how dreadful must that be which he will put into the hands of the wicked? We may learn hence, what an evil thing and bitter sin is, and how angry God is with it.

5. From the whole chapter we are taught, how vain it is to think of escaping the judgments of God. Who can oppose his designs, or resist his power, when he will punish a wicked nation? not the fortifications of Rabbah, nor the wisdom of Edom, nor the palaces of Damascus, nor the obscurity of Kedar, nor the bows of Elam: He can appoint whom he will to execute his vengeance. Various as the characters, circumstances, situations, and religions of these several countries were, God appears as their supreme Lord and disposer. We should therefore seek his favour, and trust only in him, in whose hand is the fate of nations.

CHAP. L.

This and the next chapter foretell the fall of Babylon and the restoration of Israel and Judah, who were to survive their oppressors; and this long and sublime prophecy was sent to Babylon for the encouragement of the Jewish captives in that place.

1 THE word that the LORD spake against Babylon [and]
against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the pro-
2 phet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a
standard; publish, [and] conceal not; *publish the good news to*
those nations that are oppressed by the Chaldeans: say, Babylon
is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her
3 idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out
of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall
make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they
shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.
4 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children
of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together,
going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their
God *with genuine contrition, they shall apply to Jehovah as the*
5 *true God, and not to idols.* They shall ask the way to Zion
with their faces thitherward, [saying,] Come, and let us join our-
selves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant [that] shall not be
6 forgotten. My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds
have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away
[on] the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill,
7 they have forgotten their resting place. All that found them
have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not,
because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of
justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers; *because God*
did not cast them off, but they rejected him, their adversaries
8 *thought this was a sufficient reason for devouring them.* Remove
out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the
Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks; *let the great*
men lead the way, set a good example, and go on resolutely.
9 For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an
assembly of great nations from the north country; *the Persians*
and Medes: and they shall set themselves in array against her;
from thence she shall be taken: their arrows [shall be] as of
10 a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea
shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the
11 LORD; *they shall have abundance of plunder.* Because ye were
glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage,
because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as
bulls; *because ye exceeded the divine commission, took pleasure*
in the destruction of my people, and became luxurious by the plun-
12 *der of so many other nations;* Your mother shall be sore con-

founded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations [shall be] a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert; *or rather, it shall be the hindermost of the nations,*
13 *contemptible, and a wilderness.* Because of the wrath of the LORD, it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at
14 all her plagues. Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows:
15 for she hath sinned against the LORD. Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand, *she hath surrendered herself:* her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it [is] the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her: as
16 she hath done, do unto her. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: *(referring perhaps to the great quantity of land within the walls:)* for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.
17 Israel [is] a scattered sheep; the lions have driven [him] away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last
18 this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones; *made an utter destruction of him as a nation.* Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the
19 king of Assyria. And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be
20 satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and [there shall be] none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve; *there shall be no more idolatry, their sins shall be pardoned, and God perfectly reconciled. The next verse is God's commission to Cyrus.*
21 Go up against the land of Merathaim, [even] against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD; *or, 'against the land of bitternesses go up;' that is, against Babylon, so called because it had proved such to the Jewish nation; 'upon it and its inhabitants visit, O sword, and utterly destroy their posterity;'** and do according to all that I have commanded thee.
22 A sound of battle [is] in the land, and of great destruction.
23 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken!
24 how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware; *the city shall be taken by surprise:* thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the
25 LORD. The LORD hath opened his armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this [is] the work of
26 the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. Come

* Dr. Blayney.

against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses; *or, fattening stalls:* cast her up, *or trample upon her* as heaps, and
27 destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left. Slay all her bullocks, *the great men*, let them go down to the slaughter: wo unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visita-
28 tion. The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, *and who are sent to bring the tidings*, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his tem-
29 ple. Call together the archers against Babylon: *the Persians, who were famous archers:* all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against
30 the Holy One of Israel. Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day,
31 saith the LORD. Behold, I [am] against thee, [O thou] most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the
32 time [that] I will visit thee. And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.

33 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel, *those of the ten tribes who settled in Judea after the captivity of Israel,* and the children of Judah [were] oppressed together, and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let
34 them go. Their Redeemer [is] strong; the LORD of hosts [is] his name; he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

35 A sword [is] upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her
36 wise [men.] A sword [is] upon the liars; and they shall dote *upon their astrologers, who yet could not foresee their own ruin:* a sword [is] upon her mighty men; and they shall be
37 dismayed. A sword [is] upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that [are] in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword [is]
38 upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed. A drought [is] upon her waters, and they shall be dried up; *(referring to the taking of Babylon by draining the river:)* for it [is] the land of graven images, and they are mad upon [their] idols, *as if they*
39 *had lost the understanding of men.* Therefore the wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands, shall dwell [there,] and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to
40 generation.* As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour [cities] thereof, saith the LORD; [so] shall no man
41 abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein. Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation

* Accordingly it was afterwards made a park for the kings of Persia, and by degrees ruined, so that the remains of it are not now to be found.

and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.
42 They shall hold the bow and the lance: they [are] cruel, and will not show mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, [every one] put in array, like a man
43 to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon. The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, [and] pangs as of a woman in
44 travail. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who [is] a chosen [man that] I may appoint over her? for who [is] like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who [is] that shepherd
45 that will stand before me?* Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he
46 shall make [their] habitation desolate with them. At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

REFLECTIONS.

WAVING such remarks as often occur concerning the power of God over the nations, his appointing and succeeding *his* instruments, and humbling nations for their pride, oppression, and luxury; we here see,

1. What is the disposition of true penitents, and God's gracious regards to them, *v.* 4, 5. They have godly sorrow for sin; lament their former iniquities; seek the Lord, and not idols, not the world and the flesh, but return to him as their God and ruler; and seek the way to heaven, setting their faces thitherward, as fully bent and resolved to get there. They keep the way to it, and solemnly devote themselves to God; binding themselves by the strongest engagements never to depart from him; and when this is the case, then will God *blot out their sins*, and *be gracious to them*, *v.* 20.

2. It is happy for his people amidst all their distresses, that God is their Redeemer. Babylon was a most powerful nation; it oppressed and subdued all the nations round about, and brake Israel's bones: but their Redeemer is strong; able to humble their enemy's pride, and deliver his people. How delightful a thought, amidst the oppressions and persecutions of his church! It affords comfort likewise to particular souls, amidst the strength of temptations and corruptions. Let us be solicitous to keep near to God by earnest prayer, and to engage his help; for *if God be for us, who can be against us?*

* What had been said in the former chapter of Nebuchadnezzar's ruining Edom, is here said of Babylon: a beautiful contrast; the king of Babylon, who was before represented as a lion, is now a helpless shepherd.

CHAP. LI.

In this chapter is the prophecy of God's severe judgment against Babylon in revenge of Israel.

1 THUS saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against
Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of
them that rise up against me, *that is, in the midst of my enemies,*
2 a destroying wind: And will send unto Babylon fanners, that
shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble
3 they shall be against her round about. Against [him that]
bendeth let the archer, *or Persian soldier*, bend his bow, and
against [him that] lifteth himself up in his brigandine, *or coat of mail*, and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all
4 her host. Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans,
5 and [they that are] thrust through in her streets. For Israel
[hath] not [been] forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of
hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy
6 One of Israel. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver
every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this [is]
the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a
7 recompense.* Babylon [hath been] a golden cup in the LORD's
hand, that made all the earth drunken *with her idolatry*: the
nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are
8 mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her;
9 take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would
have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; *Daniel and other prophets reproved her for idolatry*; forsake her, *for she is irrecoverable*, and let us go every one into his own country; for
her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up [even] to
10 the skies. The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness,
or, deliverance, and justified us against the cruelty of the Babylonians, and the idolatry they would impose: come, and let us de-
11 clare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. Make bright the
arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit
of the kings of the Medes; *Darius, Cyrus' uncle*: for his device [is] against Babylon, to destroy it; because it [is] the
12 vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. Set up
the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong,
set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD
hath both devised and done that which he spake against the in-
13 habitants of Babylon. O thou that dwellest upon many waters,
that is, on the river Euphrates, which ran through Babylon and round it, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, [and] the
14 measure of thy covetousness. The LORD of hosts hath sworn
by himself, [saying,] Surely I will fill thee with men, as with

*They might think it safest to be in Babylon, but God commands them to go out, as Christ warned the Christians before the siege of Jerusalem, and thus was the means of saving all who believed his word.

15 caterpillers: and they shall lift up a shout aganist thee. He hath
made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his
wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understand-
16 ing. When he uttereth [his] voice, [there is] a multitude of
waters in the heavens: and he causeth the vapours to ascend
from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain,
17 and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Every man
is brutish by [his] knowledge; every founder is confounded by
the graven image: for his molten image [is] falsehood, and
18 [there is] no breath in them. They [are] vanity, the work of
19 errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The
portion of Jacob [is] not like them; for he [is] the former of all
things: and [Israel is] the rod of his inheritance; the LORD
20 of hosts [is] his name. Thou, *Cyrus*, [art] my battle ax [and]
weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations,
21 and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; And with thee will I
break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I
22 break in pieces the chariot and his rider; With thee also will I
break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in
pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces
23 the young man and the maid; I will also break in pieces with
thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in
pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee
24 will I break in pieces captains and rulers. And I will render
unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil
that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD; *ye*
25 *shall see my vengeance upon them.* Behold, I [am] against thee,
O destroying mountain, saith the LORD,* which destroyest all
the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll
thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt moun-
tain; *it shall be put out, and nothing remain but a heap of ashes*
26 *and cinders.* And they shall not take of thee a stone for a cor-
ner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for
27 ever, saith the LORD. Set ye up a standard in the land, blow
the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her,
call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and
Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her, *under the govern-*
ment of the Medes; cause the horses to come up as the rough
28 caterpillers. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of
the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and
29 all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and
sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed
against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation
30 without an inhabitant. The mighty men of Babylon have
forborn to fight, they have remained in [their] holds: their
might hath failed; they became as women:† they have burned

* Babylon is so called on account of its high walls and towers; as a burning mountain, it cast out fire, and consumed all about it.

† This was fulfilled in Cyrus' order, that not a Chaldean should show his head on pain of death, while he went round the city after it was taken.

her dwelling places; her bars are broken. One post shall run
to meet another, and one messenger to meet another; to show
the king of Babylon that his city is taken at [one] end,* And
that the passages are stopped, *by turning the course of the river,*
and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war
are affrighted. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of
Israel; The daughter of Babylon [is] like a threshing floor,
[it is] time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her
harvest shall come. Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath
devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty
vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his
belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out; *he hath swallowed the*
Jews whole, as serpents do their prey, and should throw them up again;
The violence done to me and to my flesh, [be] upon Babylon,
shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhab-
itants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say. Therefore thus saith
the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance
for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.
And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons,
an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. They
shall roar together like lions; they shall yell as lions' whelps.
In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them
drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and
not wake, saith the LORD; *their city shall be taken at a great*
festival, when most of them are drunk and asleep; and while they
are engaged in their drunken revels, I will prepare a different
cup, a final opiate for them. I will bring them down like lambs
to the slaughter, like rams with he goats. How is Sheshach ta-
ken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprized! how
is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! The
sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multi-
tude of the waves thereof; *vast armies are often compared to*
waters. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilder-
ness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth [any] son
of man pass thereby. And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I
will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed
up; *the vessels and sacred treasures of the Jews:* and the na-
tions shall not flow together any more unto him, *to present their*
offerings; yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall. My people, go
ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul
from the fierce anger of the LORD. And lest your heart faint,
and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a
rumour shall both come [one] year, and after that in [another]
year [shall come] a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler
against ruler.† Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will

* Considering the vast extent of the city, and that the palace was in the middle, it must be a long time before they knew that the enemy had gained entrance. Ancient writers say it was three days before the whole city was acquainted with it.

† When war began in the country, in the first year Belshazzar's army was beaten, in the second year the city was besieged, and in the third year it was taken.

do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: *and* her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the
48 midst of her. Then the heaven and the earth, and all that [is] therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come
49 unto her from the north, saith the LORD. As Babylon [hath caused] the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the
50 slain of all the earth. Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still; remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind; *think not of Babylon, but return*
51 *to Jerusalem.* We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD'S house; *it is a reproach to us that the sanctuary should continue waste, when we may go*
52 *and rebuild it.* Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and
53 through all her land the wounded shall groan. Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, [yet] from me shall spoilers come
54 unto her, saith the LORD. A sound of a cry [cometh] from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans:
55 Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters,
56 a noise of their voice is uttered: Because the spoiler is come upon her, [even] upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the Lord GOD of rec-
57 ompenses shall surely requite. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise [men,] her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name [is] the LORD of hosts.
58 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire, *though the walls are fifty feet broad, and three hundred feet high, full of towers and strong brazen gates;* and the people shall labour in vain *to save themselves*, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And [this] Seraiah [was] a quiet prince; *or rather,*
60 *the chief chamberlain, who was charged with some present or tribute to the king of Babylon.* So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the
61 evil that should come upon Babylon, [even] all these words [that are] written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt
62 read all these words *to the captive Jews;* Then shalt thou say,
63 O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that *it shall* be desolate for ever. And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, [that] thou shalt bind a stone to it, and

64 cast it into the midst of Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary; *they shall not succeed, whatever attempts they may make for their safety.* Thus far [are] the words of Jeremiah.

REFLECTIONS.

1. GOD's wonderful appearances for a people ought to be acknowledged in the public assembly, *v.* 10. Those benefits which many share, ought to be owned with united hearts and tongues, especially the blessings of peace and national prosperity.

2. It becomes us to concern ourselves in the interests of the church; to have Jerusalem in our mind, though at a distance from it. Whether in prosperity, or in trouble, still the concerns of the church should affect our hearts; and we should *seek the things of Jesus Christ.*

3. When we are hearing the declarations of God's word, we ought to acknowledge the truth and justice of them, *v.* 62. Babylon was now flourishing, its strength and populousness made it unlikely that it should be taken and destroyed; but Seraiah is directed to own, after reading the predictions against it, that they were God's declarations, and would certainly be fulfilled: and thus should we acknowledge, *O Lord, thy words are true, thy judgments are right.*

4. The accomplishment of this prophecy should confirm our faith in the downfall of mystical Babylon, the church of Rome; which is described in images like these; the mother of harlots, the seat of idolatry and persecution. Many passages in the Revelations are taken from this chapter; particularly the angel taking a millstone and casting it into the sea, is an allusion to the prophet's casting the book into Euphrates; and we may rest assured that it shall be fulfilled in its season. Let us pray for its accomplishment; and in the mean time, as God hath granted us deliverance from Babylon, let us *declare in Zion the works of the Lord.*

CHAP. LII.

This historical chapter was added by some other hand, probably by Ezra, after Jeremiah's time, to throw light upon the prophecies of this book, and to illustrate the Lamentations, which follow. It contains an account of Zedekiah's rebellion; of the siege and taking of Jerusalem; of Zedekiah's sons being killed, and his own eyes put out; and of the city being spoiled and burned.

1 ZEDEKIAH [was] one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name [was] Hamutal the daughter of Jeremi-
2 ah of Libnah. And he did [that which was] evil in the eyes of

3 the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through
the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah,
till he had cast them out from his presence, *the presence of his providence in the land, and of his grace in the temple,* that Zede-
kiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.
4 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the
tenth month, in the tenth [day] of the month, [that] Nebuchad-
rezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jeru-
salem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round
5 about, *to prevent relief and to batter the city.* So the city was
6 besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And in the
fourth month, in the ninth [day] of the month, the famine was
sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the
7 land, *many having fled out of the country into it.** Then the city
was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out
of the city by night, by the way of the gate between the two
walls, which [was] by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans [were]
by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain.
8 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and
overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army
9 was scattered from him. Then they took the king and carried
him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Ha-
10 math; where he gave judgment upon him *as a rebel.* And the
king of Babylon slew the sons, *the young children,* of Zedekiah
before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah.
11 Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Baby-
lon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put
him in prison till the day of his death.
12 Now in the fifth month, in the tenth [day] of the month,
which [was] the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of
Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, [which] serv-
13 ed the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And burned the house
of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jeru-
salem, and all the houses of the great [men,] burned he with
fire; *the temple having been spared when the city was taken, a cruel resolution was formed a month afterward to destroy both it*
14 *and the city:* And all the army of the Chaldeans, that [were]
with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jeru-
salem round about, *that it might make no further resistance.*
15 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive
[certain] of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people
that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to
16 the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude. But Nebu-
zaradan the captain of the guard left [certain] of the poor of the
land for vine dressers and for husbandmen.
17 Also the pillars of brass that [were] in the house of the LORD,
and the bases, and the brazen sea that [was] in the house of
the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them

* We have a dreadful description of this in the book of the Lamentations.

18 to Babylon. The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuf-
fers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass
19 wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the basons,
and the fire pans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the can-
dlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; [that] which [was] of
gold [in] gold, and [that] which [was] of silver [in] silver,
20 took the captain of the guard away. The two pillars, one sea,
and twelve brazen bulls that [were] under the bases, which king
Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all
21 these vessels was without weight. And [concerning] the pil-
lars, the height of one pillar [was] eighteen cubits; and a fillet
of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof
22 [was] four fingers: [it was] hollow. And a chapiter of brass
[was] upon it; and the height of one chapiter [was] five cu-
bits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapiters round
about, all [of] brass. The second pillar also and the pomegran-
23 ates [were] like unto these. And there were ninety and six
pomegranates on a side; [and] all the pomegranates upon the
network [were] an hundred round about.

24 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest,
and Zephaniah the second priest, *who was to act in case of the sickness or incapacity of the high priest*, and the three keepers of
25 the door: He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the
charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were
near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the
principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the
land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were
found in the midst of the city, *and who were the principal persons employed in preventing Zedekiah's surrender, and in prosecuting*
26 *Jeremiah*. So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them,
27 and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. And the
king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in
the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out
of his own land.

28 This [is] the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away
captive: in the seventh year, three thousand Jews and three
and twenty *of the tribe of Judah, (for there were in all ten thou-*
29 *sand*, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 14.) In the eighteenth year of Nebuchad-
rezzar, he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred
30 thirty and two persons: In the three and twentieth year of Neb-
uchadrezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away
captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons; *a third captivity, not mentioned elsewhere, (probably the persons concerned in the murder of Gedaliah;)* all the persons [were] four thou-
sand and six hundred.

31 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the
captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in
the five and twentieth [day] of the month,* [that] Evilmero-

* In the book of Kings it is said the twenty seventh; perhaps the orders were given the twenty fifth, and executed the twenty seventh.

dach king of Babylon, in the [first] year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth
32 out of prison, And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that [were] with him in Babylon,
33 And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat
34 bread before him all the days of his life. And [for] his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life; *that is, he gave him an allowance for the support of his family; which was an encouragement to the pious Jews, and an omen of their approaching deliverance.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. AS a general lesson from this chapter and the whole book, we may observe the sad consequences of rebellion against God, and of refusing to hearken to his word. Zedekiah would not take warning, though it was so plainly and affectionately given by Jeremiah; and therefore he was involved in all this misery; his sons were slain, his eyes were put out, and he was made a prisoner for life. The Israelites would not hearken, and therefore were they carried captive; their principal persons slain; and their city and temple destroyed. A terrible description of their misery will be seen in the next book. See how wretchedly God's own people may degenerate; and that when they do so, their relation to him will not save them from ruin, but expose them to greater. See also how righteous and faithful, how exact and punctual, how awful and terrible, God is, in executing his threatenings. No word of his falls to the ground. May we, may all the inhabitants of Britain, take warning by this dreadful story! *All these things happened to them for examples, and they are written for our admonition.*

2. From the captivity of Jehoiachin we may observe, what surprizing scenes of Providence sometimes open upon men; and what a changing world this is. First he was a monarch; then seven and thirty years a prisoner; then released, and honourably supported. God knows how to bring about such changes; he can debase the highest down to the dust; can take the poor from the dunghill, to set them among princes; and give men favour in the eyes of their enemies. Those who are now prosperous should *remember the days of darkness, which may be many*, that they may be humble and cautious. Those who have been long in deep affliction, should be patient and contented; not knowing what prosperous scenes may be before them. It is at least certain, that all good men shall experience a more wonderful change than this monarch did, when Christ shall call them from the prison of the grave, give them the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and advance them to sit down on his throne, to be happy with him for ever.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Lamentations of Jeremiah were composed soon after the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah. They are divided into five distinct chapters, which are so many beautiful elegies, bewailing those sad events.

CHAP. I.

In which Jerusalem's misery for her sins is related, with her complaint, and confession of God's righteousness.

1 HOW doth the city sit solitary, [that was] full of people! [how] is she become as a widow! she [that was] great among the nations, [and] princess among the provinces, [how]
2 is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears [are] on her cheeks, *like a sincere mourner when alone:* among all her lovers, *or allies*, she hath none to comfort [her:] all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are be-
3 come her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude; *because they had afflicted and oppressed their brethren:* she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her
4 between the straits, *or, in the narrow passages.* The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts; *the ways that lead to Zion, which used to be crouded on those occasions:* all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she [is] in bitterness; *all her mirth and gaiety*
5 *are gone.* Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the ene-
6 my. And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts [that] find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer; *not like a hunted deer, wearied out in the chase; but like one ready to die with hunger before the chase began, which therefore only makes*

a feeble, short effort, and then drops down: a most expressive
7 *simile.* Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, *God's presence, his temple, his ordinances, and prophets,* when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, [and] did mock at her sabbaths; *or, laughed at her discontinuing them, as if she had only*
8 *kept them out of sloth.* Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth
9 backward. Her filthiness [is] in her skirts, *it is visible on her garments;* she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully; *all is the effect of her sin:* she had no comforter. O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy
10 hath magnified [himself.] The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things, *upon her rich furniture, jewels, and plate:* for she hath seen [that] the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command [that] they should
11 not enter into thy congregation. All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile,
12 [Is it] nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted [me] in the day of his
13 fierce anger.* From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaileth against them; *I am like a person struck with lightning, which has broken my bones and pierced my vitals:* he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made
14 me desolate [and] faint all the day. The yoke of my transgressions, *the burden of my iniquities,* is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, [and] come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the LORD hath delivered me into [their] hands,
15 [from whom] I am not able to rise up. The LORD hath trodden under foot all my mighty [men] in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the LORD hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, *fair and delicate as she was,* [as] in a winepress; *she was crushed to*
16 *pieces by the Chaldeans, as grapes in a press.* For these [things] I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me: my
17 children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed. Zion spreadeth forth her hands *in supplication,* [and there is] none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, [that] his adversaries [should be] round about him: Jerusa-

* A beautiful apostrophe, much admired by the critics. The plaintiff, having no friend or companion to open his grief to, is forced to implore the pity of strangers and passengers. It intimates that no words were necessary to raise compassion, it was sufficient to look on his case, to see that his sorrow was unequalled: it intimates also, that he had met with little compassion from some that had passed by; and that therefore he expostulated with others.

lem is as a menstruous woman among them, *one set apart as unclean.*

18 The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.
19 I called for my lovers, [but] they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought
20 their meat to relieve their souls. Behold, O LORD; for I [am] in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home [there is] as death, *or certain death by famine.*
21 They have heard that I sigh: [there is] none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done [it:] thou wilt bring the day [that] thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me; *thou wilt execute like judgments upon them, as thou hast foretold.*
22 Let all their wickedness come before thee, *that is, it shall come;* and do unto them, *or, thou wilt do unto them,* as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs [are] many, and my heart [is] faint.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE distress of nations ought to afflict every human heart. See what calamities war makes; and what great reason we have to be thankful that we have not been witnesses of, or sharers in, such terrible desolations. We have reason to pity and pray for those who have; and to bless God for peace and plenty. But O, think of those who are now returning to their houses and possessions, and find them all waste and desolate; and offer up earnest prayers that God would support and provide for them.

2. The distresses of the church will particularly affect every pious heart. These the prophet tenderly laments. It is great joy to good men to see the church prosperous, and the ways to Zion crouded; and grievous to see her assemblies broken up by persecution; or her ways neglected by those who have no good reason for such neglect; to see their places empty, though they can pursue their business or pleasure; and thus throw contempt upon sacred things. It is grievous to hear the wicked mocking at their sabbaths. But pious men will not look upon them as less honourable, delightful, and advantageous on that account.

3. Let us acknowledge the hand and righteousness of God in all our afflictions. This is often mentioned, *righteous art thou, O Lord.* It becomes us to acknowledge this before him, and before men. It is a great comfort that we can apply to him and expect relief from him. Too many when afflicted are apt to adopt the passionate complaints of the prophet; but it would be better for them to observe and adopt his expressions of humiliation, and his prayers for support.

CHAP. II.

Jeremiah laments Jerusalem's misery, and she is directed to sue earnestly for mercy and pardon.

1 HOW hath the LORD covered the daughter of Zion with a
cloud in his anger, [and] cast down from heaven unto
the earth *the temple*, the beauty of Israel, and remembered not
2 *the ark* his footstool in the day of his anger! The LORD hath
swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied:
he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought [them] down to the ground: he
hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof, *even the*
3 *royal family which he had chosen himself.* He hath cut off in [his]
fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his
right hand, *his wonted assistance*, from before the enemy, and
he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, [which] devoureth
4 round about. He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood
with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all [that were]
pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion,
the honourable, the reverend and the young; he poured out his
5 fury like fire. The LORD was as an enemy, *like a lion*: he
hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces:
he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the
6 daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. And he hath
violently taken away his tabernacle, as [if it were of] a garden;
as if it was a hovel or shed in a garden, contemptible and easily removed: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the
LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten
in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the
7 king and the priest. The LORD hath cast off his altar, he hath
abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the
enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the
house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast; *but a very different noise, not the shout of worshippers, but of enemies; not the dying groans of victims, but of the worshippers themselves.*
8 The LORD hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of
Zion: he hath stretched out a line *in righteousness*, he hath not
withdrawn his hand from destroying: therefore he made the
rampart and the wall to lament: they languished together.
9 Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and
broken her bars: her king and her princes [are] among the
Gentiles: the law [is] no [more;] her prophets also find no
vision from the LORD; *her priests and nobles are gone, the book of the law is destroyed, her worship is impracticable, some of her prophets are captives, others have no vision, or none that is*
10 *comfortable.* The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the
ground, [and] keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their

heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth; the vir-
11 gins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground. Mine
eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is pour-
ed upon the earth, *or, I am wounded to the liver, and my gall is
poured out*, for the destruction of the daughter of my people;
because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of
12 the city. They say to their mothers, *who once lived in affluence*,
Where [is] corn and wine? when they swooned as the wound-
ed in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into
13 their mother's bosom. What thing shall I take to witness for
thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusa-
lem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O
virgin daughter of Zion? *as if he had said, I am quite at a loss to
find any simile strong enough; where can we find such an instance
of distress?* for thy breach [is] great like the sea; *there can be
14 no means found to stop the inundation:* who can heal thee? Thy
prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have
not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but
have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment; *they
have not dealt plainly, but have deceived thee with false hopes and
15 flattering prophecies, which have hastened thy ruin.* All that pass
by clap [their] hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the
daughter of Jerusalem, [saying, Is] this the city that [men]
16 call The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? All
thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss
and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed [her] up:
certainly this [is] the day that we looked for; we have found,
we have seen [it,] *we expected it would come to this, and we could
17 wish for nothing more.* The LORD hath done [that] which he
had devised; he hath fulfilled his word, that he hath command-
ed in the days of old; *that is, the threatenings of his law,* (*Lev.*
xxvi. 16.) he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath
caused [thine] enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the
18 horn of thine adversaries. Their heart cried unto the LORD, O
wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day
and night: give thyself no rest: let not the apple of thine eye
19 cease. Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the
watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the
LORD: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young
children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.
20 Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this.
Shall the women eat their fruit, [and] children of a span long?
shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the
21 LORD? The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets:
my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast
slain [them] in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed [and]
22 not pitied. Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors
round about, so that in the day of the LORD's anger none escap-
ed nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up

hath mine enemy consumed; *wherever I turn, I see terror coming as thick as I have seen worshippers coming from all parts, in the days of our feasts.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE must acknowledge that it is just in God to take away those privileges which men abuse. Israel had many glorious advantages above other nations, but they grew careless, disobedient, and presumptuous; therefore God was righteous in taking them away. He destroyed the tabernacle, which they had neglected; made the ways of Zion mourn, which they had forsaken; he caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to cease, which they had deserted and profaned; he took away the prophets, whom they had ill treated, and the law which they had forgotten. Let us take warning by this; for if we do not value and improve our christian privileges, God will take them away. Let us *remember, whence we have fallen, and repent, lest he come quickly and take his candlestick from us.*

2. In God's dealings with his church, it is good to take notice of the accomplishment of his word. This Israel is often reminded of, that the Lord hath done what he hath proposed and devised, and fulfilled the word which he commanded in the days of old. There is a constant agreement between the declarations of God's word, and the events of his providence; and the more carefully we compare them together, the greater reason we shall see to acknowledge that his judgments are right, and to be afraid of his just indignation.

3. The want of faithfulness and plainness in christian ministers, is one source of national calamities. It is their duty to discover to men their iniquities, and to show them their sins, in order to prevent their everlasting banishment from God and happiness. If they flatter them, and address them as if all was well, when they know, or have reason to believe, that they are yet in their sins, they are false prophets, are accessary to the ruin of souls, and endanger their own salvation. We should therefore allow them to deal plainly with us, because they are thereby consulting our happiness, as well as discharging their own duty.

4. Prayer ought to be our business, and will be our best relief in time of trouble. An instructive view is here given us of the nature of prayer, and that fervency in it which we ought to manifest, v. 19. It is *crying to the Lord, lifting up the hands toward him*, with earnestness and importunity, pouring out the heart like water; so free and full and particular should our supplications be. *Is any man afflicted, let him thus pray; stir up himself to take hold on God;* and he will in the best time and way deliver him out of all his distresses.

CHAP. III.

The prophet in this chapter encourages the people to resignation, and to trust in the divine mercy; he vindicates the goodness of God in all his dispensations, and the unreasonableness of murmuring under them; he recommends self examination and repentance; and then, from their experience of former deliverances, encourages them to look to God for the pardon of their sins, and retribution to their enemies. The chapter is poetical, like the former; but as may be seen by the length of the verses, is of different measure: it contains twenty two periods, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet; and each period contains three verses, which have all the same initial letter.

1 I [AM] the man [that] hath seen affliction by the rod of his
2 wrath; *representing the case of his country as his own.* He
hath led me, and brought [me into] darkness, but not [into] light.
3 Surely against me is he turned, *he who was formerly kind to me;*
4 he turneth his hand [against me] all the day. My flesh and my
5 skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He hath
builded against me, and compassed [me] with gall and travel.
6 He hath set me in dark places, as [they that be] dead of old.
7 He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out; *there is no*
possibility of my escape: he hath made my chain heavy; *I am*
8 *like a malefactor strongly fettered.* Also when I cry and shout,
9 he shutteth out my prayer. He hath inclosed my ways with
hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked; *I try every way*
10 *and place to get out of my trouble, but cannot.* He [was] unto
11 me [as] a bear lying in wait, [and as] a lion in secret places. He
hath turned aside my ways, *cut off my retreat, and turned full up-*
12 *on me,* and pulled me in pieces; he hath made me desolate. He
13 hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. He
hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins; *he*
14 *hath given me mortal and incurable wounds.* I was a derision to
all my people; *or, the people of my enemies;* [and] their song all
15 the day. He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me
16 drunken with wormwood. He hath also broken my teeth with
gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes; *or, deceived me*
17 *with ashes, giving me ashes instead of bread.* And thou hast re-
moved my soul far off from peace: I forgat prosperity, *and*
18 *despaired of its return.* And I said, My strength and my hope is
19 perished from the LORD: Remembering mine affliction and my
20 misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath [them] still
in remembrance, and is humbled in me; *I have still new occa-*
21 *sions to recollect them.* This I recall to my mind, *that is, this which*
follows; I have yet stores of comfort, therefore have I hope.
22 [It is of] the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, be-
23 cause his compassions fail not. [They are] new every morn-

ing: great [is] thy faithfulness. The LORD [is] my portion,
saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD [is] good
unto them that wait for him, to the soul [that] seeketh him. [It
is] good that a [man] should both hope and quietly wait for the
salvation of the LORD. [It is] good for a man that he bear the
yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, be-
cause he hath borne [it] upon him; *when it is laid upon him he
is disposed to serious reflection and consideration.* He putteth his
mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope *of regaining the
divine favour.* He giveth [his] cheek to him that smiteth him;
he submits to injuries from men: he is filled full with reproach.
For the LORD will not cast off for ever: But though he cause
grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of
his mercies; *he will plead the cause of his people, and bring them
out of captivity.* For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve
the children of men. To crush under his feet all the prisoners
of the earth, *by violence or fraud,* To turn aside the right of a
man before the face of the most High, *without any regard to
him,* To subvert a man in his cause, the LORD approveth not;
*but is displeased with these things, and will punish them; as if he
had said, Though God gave the Israelites into the hands of their en-
emies, yet he disapproved of their inhuman and cruel conduct, and
will reckon with them for it.*

Who [is] he [that] saith, and it cometh to pass, [when] the
LORD commandeth [it] not? Out of the mouth of the most
High proceedeth not evil and good? *or, doth not evil and good
come from him? that is, however they may boast, he overrules
their designs.* Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man
for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways,
and turn again to the LORD. Let us lift up our heart with [our]
hands unto God in the heavens. We have transgressed and have
rebelled: thou hast not pardoned; *hast not removed thy judgments
from us.* Thou hast covered *thy face* with anger, and persecuted
us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered
thyself with a cloud, that [our] prayer should not pass through.
Thou hast made us [as] the offscouring and refuse in the midst
of the people. All our enemies have opened their mouths
against us. Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and
destruction. Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for
the destruction of the daughter of my people. Mine eye trick-
leth down and ceaseth not, without any intermission, Till the
LORD look down and behold from heaven. Mine eye affecteth
mine heart because of all the daughters of my city; *or, because
of the desolation of the city and country, and the calamities which I
see in the towns and cities about Jerusalem.* Mine enemies chas-
ed me sore, like a bird without cause. They have cut off my
life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me; *this was applica-
ble to Jeremiah literally, and, figuratively to others; all are de-
scribed as one person in deep distress.* Waters flowed over mine

55 head; [then] I said, I am cut off. I called upon thy name, O
56 LORD, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice:
57 hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day [that] I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.
58 O LORD, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast
59 redeemed my life. O LORD, thou hast seen my wrong; judge
60 thou my cause. Thou hast seen all their vengeance, [and] all
61 their imaginations against me. Thou hast heard their reproach,
62 O LORD, [and] all their imaginations against me; The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the
63 day. Behold their sitting down and their rising up; I [am]
64 their music. Render unto them, *or, thou wilt render unto them* a recompense, O LORD, according to the work of their hands
65 *against us.* Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them;
66 *or, the curses threatened against the enemies of thy people.* Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD, *where thou rulest supreme, and from whence they can go no where, but thou canst reach them.*

REFLECTION.

THE practical reflections that may be drawn from this chapter are too many to be distinctly specified. The most important of them have been illustrated and recommended at large. It is sufficient now to observe, that it is particularly suited to the case of those who are in affliction. It directs them to observe the hand of God in it; not to be surprized if their afflictions be long and heavy, and if God seems to shut out their prayer. It is our duty in such cases to humble ourselves before him, and to acknowledge that *it is of his mercies that we are not consumed.* It is unreasonable to complain of the punishment of our sins; and our duty to search and try ourselves; to repent, and return to God; and continue in prayer, though we are not immediately answered. We are to *hope and wait for his salvation;* and in the mean time to observe the mercies that are continued, which are new every morning; to call to mind former kindnesses, and all his promises. No condition is so desolate, but the thoughts of God may afford relief. He does not afflict willingly, and will at length have compassion. In the mean time let us rejoice in him as our portion. By accommodating ourselves to his providence, considering our ways, repenting, and returning to him, we shall find unspeakable and everlasting benefit; he will at length wipe away all tears, and turn our sighs and groans into everlasting praise.

CHAP. IV.

In which the pitiful state of Zion is bewailed, as contrasted with its ancient prosperity; the national calamities are tenderly lamented; and the ruin of the Edomites predicted; see Psalm cxxxvii. 7. *Obad.* x. 12.

1 HOW is the gold become dim! [how] is the most fine
gold, *the gildings of the temple*, changed! the stones of
the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street; *there were many streets which led to the temple, at the ends of which the ruins appeared, from whence there used to be the most beautiful*
2 *prospects.* The precious sons of Zion, *the princes and priests*,
comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitch-
3 ers, the work of the hands of the potter! Even the sea mon-
sters, *the very dragons*, draw out the breast, they give suck to
their young ones: the daughter of my people [is become]
cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness, *and are forced through*
4 *famine to neglect their own children.* The tongue of the sucking
child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young
5 children ask bread [and] no man breaketh [it] unto them. They
that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were
brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills; *they seek their food in the most nasty places, and lie on dunghills without strength to raise*
6 *themselves up.* For the punishment of the iniquity of the daugh-
ter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of
Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands
stayed on her; *it were better to have been at once buried in their houses, than to endure the horrors of a siege, and die by famine.*
7 Her Nazarites, *or nobles*, were purer than snow, they were
whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies,
8 their polishing [was] of sapphire: Their visage is blacker than
a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth
to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick; *their temperate diet contributed to their health and beauty, but, through famine and hardship, they were reduced to skeletons. A beautiful*
9 *but dreadful contrast.* [They that be] slain with the sword are
better than [they that be] slain with hunger: for these pine
away, stricken through, for [want of] the fruits of the field; *it is better to die by a sudden stroke than such a lingering death.*
10 The hands of the pitiful women have sodden, *or boiled*, their own
children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daugh-
11 ter of my people.* The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he
hath poured out his fierce anger, *and fulfilled his threatening that they should eat their children, (see Deut.* xxii. 22. *Jer.* xxi.
14;) and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the
12 foundations thereof. The kings of the earth, and all the inhab-

* This happened in three instances to the Jews, in the siege of Samaria, in the siege of Jerusalem, by the Chaldeans, and afterward by the Romans. It is remarkable that we never read of such another instance in history.

tants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem, *which were so well fortified, and had been in some instances so mi-*
13 *raculously preserved.* For the sins of her prophets, [and] the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her, *the blood of God's faithful prophets and people:*
14 They have wandered [as] blind [men] in the streets, they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments; *there were so many dead carcasses, that they could not go by without touching them, and so were polluted them-*
15 *selves, and polluted others.* They cried unto them, Depart ye; [it is] unclean; depart, depart, touch not: when they fled away and wandered,* they said among the heathen, They shall no more sojourn [there;] *they shall never return to their own land.*
16 The anger of the LORD hath divided them; he will no more regard them: they respected not the persons of the priests, they favoured not the elders; *no respect was shown to their char-*
17 *acter and office.* As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation [that]
18 could not save [us;] *that is, the Egyptians.* They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets; *they have raised their batteries so high, as to shoot us in the streets; or it may rather refer to their watching at the corners of the streets for those that lay hid:* our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is
19 come. Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for
20 us in the wilderness. The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits, *or toils; Zedekiah was taken like a wild beast,* of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen; *we might have enjoyed some gov-*
21 *ernment and religion there.* Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz;† *yet* the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make
22 thyself naked. The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity; *thou shalt not be utterly cast off, thy captivity shall be short:* he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins; *he will show how great they have been, by his heavier judgment upon thee, upon whom he will inflict a long and lasting punishment.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. SEE how dreadful a calamity famine is, and let us be thankful that we do not experience it. It is represented as worse than mortal wounds, yea, worse than the destruction of Sodom. A hor-

* This I understand of the heathen upbraiding them: they used to call the heathen unclean, and bid them depart, now they take up the language, and apply it to the Jews; *Depart ye unclean*, or polluted, *depart, depart.*

† This is spoken ironically; like Solomon, "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth;" when may'st do so for a time.

rible description of what doubtless was a fact; children that could not shift for themselves, crying for bread; parents forced to neglect them; even those who have been delicately fed and clothed perishing on dunghills; and women eating their own children. How thankful should we be for public peace, that we have food convenient for ourselves and families; and when we sit down to a plentiful table, let us make a serious, solemn business of acknowledging the bounty of God.

2. We are taught that no privileges will secure a sinful nation. Here we see the temple destroyed; its gold blackened, the Lord's anointed carried captive, the priests, elders, and Nazarites of Israel, destroyed; and all this was the effect of their own sin. Even the heathen remarked this, and upbraided them with their pretended sanctity. If persons who profess religion and boast of their privileges, are wicked, and abuse them, all the world will cry shame on them, and the righteous God will make them contemptible and miserable.

3. God can deprive men of those comforts from which they expected most satisfaction. While the Jews had a king and priests, they thought they should at least enjoy some security and repose; but God deprived them of both. If we make any creatures the breath of our nostrils; if they be too dear to us, and our lives be bound up in theirs, it will be just in God to take away their breath; to convince us of our folly, and lead us to *glorify him, in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways.*

4. Observe the difference between God's treatment of his people and his enemies. The punishment of Zion was indeed great and dreadful, yet it was soon accomplished; they were not utterly cast off. But the punishment of Edom was equally great, and there was no restoration. If God's people sin, they shall suffer; but their affliction is a fatherly chastisement; and when the end is answered, it shall be removed; while his enemies, especially those who insult over the unfortunate, and rejoice in the calamity of the church, shall be utterly destroyed. Let it therefore be our desire to be chastened of the Lord, rather than to be condemned with the world.

CHAP. V.

*This is as it were an Epiphonema, or conclusion to the preceding chapters, representing the nation as groaning under their calamities, and humbly supplicating the divine favour.**

1 REMEMBER, O LORD, what is come upon us: consider
2 and behold our reproach *among the heathen.* Our inher-
3 itance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. We are

* A greater variety of beautiful, tender, and pathetic images, all expressive of deep distress and sorrow, were never more happily chosen and applied, than in these incomparable elegies of Jeremiah.

orphans, and fatherless, our mothers [are] as widows, *destitute*
4 *of all help, and exposed to all wrong.* We have drunken our
water for money; our wood is sold unto us, *whereas before we*
5 *had plenty of both.* Our necks [are] under persecution: we
labour, [and] have no rest; *we are slaves to our enemies, and*
6 *have no rest on our sabbaths.* We have given the hand [to] the
Egyptians, [and to] the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread;
we have sold ourselves for slaves among those people to whom we
7 *fled for shelter.* Our fathers have sinned, [and are] not; *they*
are dead; and we have borne their iniquities; *undergone the*
punishment of them; by following their transgressions, and not
8 *taking warning by their calamities, we are quite ruined.* Servants
have ruled over us; *the Chaldeans allowed their servants to op-*
press them, and did not interpose: [there is] none that doth de-
9 liver [us] out of their hand. We gat our bread with [the peril
of] our lives, because of the sword of the wilderness; *if they*
went out of the city into the plain to get provisions, they were de-
10 *stroyed by the sword.* Our skin was black like an oven, because
11 of the terrible famine. They ravished the women in Zion, [and]
12 the maids in the cities of Judah. Princes are hanged up by their
hand, *by the hand of the Chaldeans:* the faces of the elders were
13 not honoured. They took the young men to grind, and the
children fell under the wood; *under the burdens of wood; they*
did the work of slaves, and great burdens were laid upon children,
14 *so that they fainted under them.* The elders have ceased from
the gate, the young men from their music; *they can no longer*
15 *entertain themselves or us.* The joy of our heart is ceased; our
dance is turned into mourning; *all entertainments and diversions*
16 *are at an end,* The crown is fallen [from] our head: wo unto
us, that we have sinned! *our kings and priests, and all our glory,*
17 *are gone because of our sins.* For this our heart is faint; for
18 these [things] our eyes are dim. Because of the mountain of
Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it *as in desolate*
19 *places.* Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; thy throne from
generation to generation; *all our comfort is derived from thine*
eternity, unchangeableness, and faithfulness to thy promises.
20 Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, [and] forsake us so long
21 time? Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turn-
ed; renew our days as of old; *restore us to our former flourish-*
ing state. The prophet then concludes with an humble expostula-
22 *tion.* But thou hast utterly rejected us; *or, wilt thou utterly*
reject us? thou art very wroth against us; *or, thou hast been*
wroth with us exceedingly.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here taught one general lesson, which cannot be too often inculcated, that it is sin which deprives us of our most valuable blessings. After the melancholy detail which

the prophet here gives of the dreadful misery of his people, he sums up all in these words; *Wo unto us, for we have sinned!* our ruin is owing to ourselves; sin is the source of our calamities. Every painful effect should still be traced up to this cause; and it becomes us seriously to lay it to heart.

2. When men have departed from God, his converting grace is necessary to bring them back. We often meet with the prophet's supplication in scripture; *turn thou us, and we shall be turned.* Men are bent to backslide, but loth to return, and unable of themselves to do it. How necessary then is it, that those who are convinced of sin should offer up their earnest supplications to God, that he would convert them: and if he exert his mighty power, how long and how deeply soever they have revolted, their souls will be restored, and led in the paths of righteousness.

3. The unchangeableness of God is the great comfort of his afflicted people. It is their duty to imitate the prophet in pouring out their complaints before the Lord: and (to encourage their hopes) to fix their thoughts on God's eternity, his perpetual dominion, and unchangeable glories. The changes of the world affect not him; he sees, directs, and overrules them all: he is the same when the world is in confusion and the church in danger, as when all things are easy and happy. Let this preserve our peace, and animate our hope in every distressing case, that *the Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion! throughout all generations.*

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.